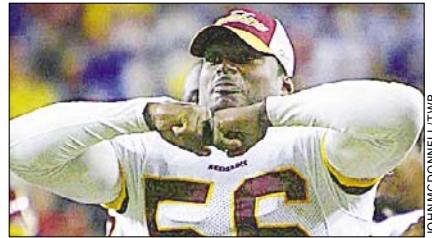


express

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Weekend



The dynamic Arrington returns after an injury.

SportsWeekend: No-name defense gets a dose of Arrington; GW hoops in Top 25 form | **13-16**

Arson Arrest: Charges filed against guard in Md. fires | **10**

Stock Up: Gifts that prove it's the little things that count | **17-20**

ENTERTAINMENT

Master of Disguise: Jim Carrey plays Count Olaf and others in 'A Series of Unfortunate Events.' Also,

'House of Flying Daggers'; 'Spanglish'; Oscars nix musicals.

>> **22-34**

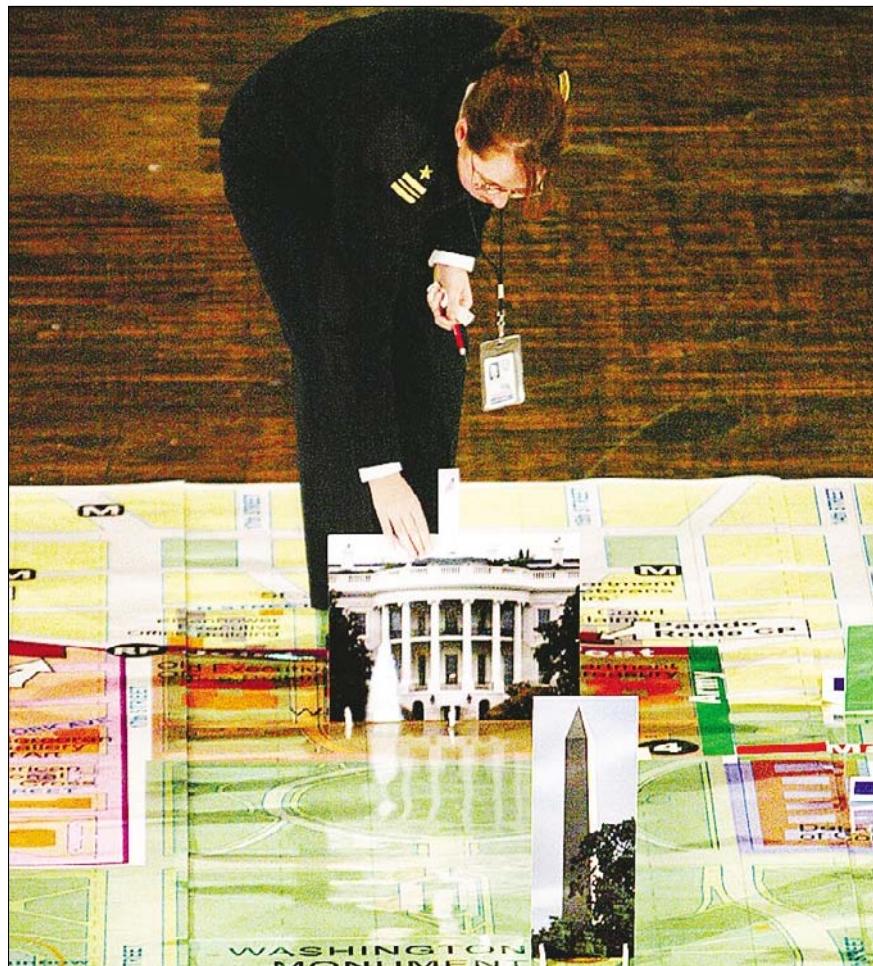
Weather > Partly Sunny



50 | 32

FULL FORECAST ON PAGE 41

BUSH INAUGURATION | PRESIDENTIAL PARTY



BIG PLANS: A military aide sets up a map of President Bush's inaugural parade route at a briefing Thursday at the D.C. Armory. About 14 floats, 45 bands and 10,000 people are set to participate.

'Bin Laden' Tape Praises Attack

CAIRO, EGYPT | A man identified as Osama bin Laden, speaking on an audiotape posted on an Islamic Web site Thursday, praised an attack earlier this month on a U.S. consulate in Saudi Arabia and criticized the Saudi regime as weak and controlled by the United States.

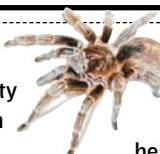
The voice sounded like the al Qaeda terror chief's, and the tape, which was more than an hour, was posted on a site known as a clearinghouse for militant Islamic comment. The identity of the voice, however, could not

be independently confirmed.

The tape appeared the same day another dissident had called for anti-monarchy protests in the kingdom.

The tape's reference to the Dec. 6 attack — in which five militants shot their way into the compound of the U.S. Consulate in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, killing five non-American employees — showed that it was made recently. Four of the attackers were killed and one was wounded in the consulate attack. (AP)

HEALTH | The Arachnid Is In And you thought tarantula venom was a bad thing. Researchers at the State University of New York at Buffalo isolated a substance in the spider's venom that could lead to treatments for conditions as diverse as mus-



cular dystrophy, urinary incontinence and cardiac arrhythmias, USA Today reported. The compound, called GsMTx4, keeps ion channels in cell membrane walls from opening, which can prevent health problems, the scientists said. (EXPRESS) **EyeOpeners** | Page 2

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Williams Holding Out Hope

Mayor says he can still save District's stalled baseball bid

WASHINGTON | As the future of a Washington baseball team hangs in the balance, the mayor said Thursday it's still possible to meet the Dec. 31 deadline for a deal.

Mayor Anthony A. Williams said his administration is working to pull together private financing to win the vote of District of Columbia Council Chairwoman Linda W. Cropp. An amendment she introduced requiring that at least half the stadium funding come from private sources was declared "wholly unacceptable" by Major League Baseball officials.

"You can expect they're going to say the things they're saying," Williams said. "This is a business deal."



Cropp said all she wants is a way for the city to save some money on the deal to build a \$440 million ballpark near the Anacostia River waterfront.

But before she offers any compromises, Cropp wants baseball to extend its deadline — insisting it has nothing to lose.

"They have everything that they had requested, basically," including a free baseball stadium, Cropp said. "Setting back the Dec. 31 deadline as truly an end point does absolutely no harm to Major League Baseball."

Cropp said new private financing proposals are coming in, but one of the most prominent involves use of profits from parking near the stadium. BRETT ZONGKER (AP)

♦ **While they're hot:** Would-be Nationals fans are snatching up team gear before it's gone | Page 13

eyeOpeners

GANGS

Swamp Sting

Illegal gangs dealing in drugs and other organized crime are turning to the countryside for a new form of contraband, The Scotsman reported. Police officers working with Scottish Natural Heritage found that illegal immigrants and asylum seekers are bussed north by criminal drug gangs to pick sphag-

num moss, which is then sold to garden centers. Large tracts of endangered peat bogs are ripped up and irreparably damaged for the black market trade in moss, used in Christmas wreaths and for hanging baskets. Sphagnum moss provides a protective layer for endangered peat bogs, and if large amounts are removed, the bog dries out and ceases to provide a haven for wildlife. (EXPRESS)

ACCIDENTS

Curbs and the Bees

A truck carrying 12 million honeybees hit a wall Wednesday on a Las Vegas, Nev., highway ramp, dumping its load across the pavement. The truck was carrying 480 bee colonies, each with 25,000 insects, to California to pollinate the state's almond crop when it struck the wall. The collision spilled the bees and gallons of honey onto

the highway and forced troopers to close the ramp for more than four hours. State police said the driver lost control on a curve in the ramp. Firefighters doused the millions of insects with water to kill them. Don Grogan, owner of Sedona Honey Co. in Las Vegas, said, "it breaks my heart." (AP)



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BOD MOD

He'll Have Them for The Rest of His Life

At age 94, Ralph Bonebreak of DuBois, Pa., is ready to be a teenager again: He's gotten his first tattoo. The retired railroad worker got a locomotive on his right arm and an eagle on his left. He said he always wanted a tattoo, but in his younger days the parlors weren't clean. He admitted to being anxious before going under the needle, but said that's natural. (AP)



NOBURO HOSHIMOTO/REUTERS

SINGLES

Arm Rest

The "Girlfriend's Arm Pillow," here demonstrated by a Kameo Corp. employee in Tokyo on Thursday, is perfect solution for the lonely man who doesn't care if his gal has furry arms. The \$76 pillow consists of a stuffed headless torso and an arm that curls around the user, providing comfort and a good night's sleep, the Japanese linen maker told Reuters. (EXPRESS)

TRASH

Dead Pets Society

Residents of Beijing are worried that the careless disposal of dead pets is hurting their campaign for a "green" Olympic Games to be held there in 2008, Xinhua news agency reported Thursday. Of the more than 200 pets that die each day in Beijing, only one is cremated. The rest are dumped in trash cans or buried in public places, a city animal crematorium said. (EXPRESS)

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DOG DAYS: President Bush's Scottish terrier Barney is the star of a new Christmas video on the White House Web site, in which Bush asks Barney to tour the mansion in search of Miss Beazley, first lady Laura Bush's new puppy.



Nation

In Brief

WASHINGTON

U.S. Man May Have Right to Challenge Saudi Detention

An American jailed in Saudi Arabia on suspicion of terrorist ties may have a right to challenge his detention in an American court if evidence shows he was arrested at the behest of the U.S. government, a federal judge ruled Thursday. He ordered federal lawyers to produce documents that would show whether U.S. officials played a role in the arrest of Ahmed Abu Ali, a 23-year-old who grew up in Falls Church, Va. (AP)

EASTCHESTER, N.Y.

Police: Nanny Leaves Baby To Go on Shopping Spree

A nanny left a year-old toddler home alone while she went Christmas shopping in the family Mercedes, not expecting the little girl's mother to pop into the house while she was out, police said Thursday. Victoria Braithwaite, 27, was arrested Wednesday and charged with reckless endangerment, endangering a child and using a car without permission, authorities said. (AP)

AUBURN, N.Y.

Judge Rules College Can Go Ahead With Plan to Go Coed

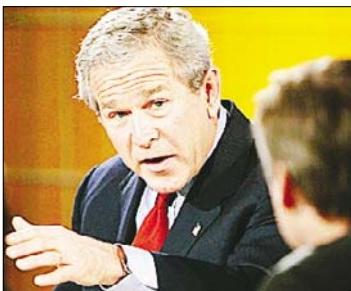
A judge Thursday refused to block Wells College's plans to allow men to enroll next year for the first time in its 136-year history. Two students had challenged the decision to go coed on several grounds, including breach of contract. (AP)

Bush Pushes Fiscal Plans

President says 'crisis is now' on overhaul of Social Security system

WASHINGTON | President Bush said Thursday the Social Security investment accounts he is proposing would have rules to prevent workers from gambling away their retirement money. He appealed for congressional action to shore up the system and said lawmakers supporting him wouldn't be risking their seats.

"This is an issue on which I campaigned and I'm still stand-



LARRY DOWNING/REUTERS

Bush participates in the economic conference in Washington on Thursday.

ing," Bush said at an economic conference promoting his proposals, including Social Security, his top legislative issue for next year.

"The crisis is now," he said, pressing for an overhaul of the system, which will be under increasing financial pressure as the baby boom generation retires and claims benefits.

He is proposing that workers be allowed to take part of the Social Security taxes they now pay into the system and instead invest in private accounts. But he said there would be restrictions on the money.

"You can't take it to the race track and hope to really increase the returns. It's not there for the lottery," Bush said.

He compared the structure of

the accounts to the investment plan available to federal workers — the Thrift Savings Plan, a tax-deferred retirement investment plan similar to a 401(k).

He spoke to a panel composed of financial firm officials and others supporting his overhaul.

Addressing concerns about the record budget deficit, Bush also promised to send Congress "a tough budget" early next year to hold the line on spending.

"You will see fiscal discipline exercised inside the Oval Office this coming budget cycle," the president said. LEIGH STROPE (AP)

 **Domestic agenda:** Bush lays out his strategy for the nation's retirement program | Today's Post, A Section

NEW YORK CITY | HAWK WATCH



RICHARD DREW/AP

CELEBRITY FLYERS: Members of the third-grade field studies class from New York City's Nightingale-Bamford School use binoculars on Thursday to catch a glimpse of two red-tailed hawks whose nest was ordered destroyed by the co-op board of a building on Fifth Ave. The board eventually gave in to bird lovers and agreed to let the birds rebuild the nest.

Sen. Lott Joins Rumsfeld Critics

BILOXI, MISS. | U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld should be replaced sometime in the next year, Sen. Trent Lott says.

"I'm not a fan of Secretary Rumsfeld," Lott told the Biloxi Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday. "I don't think he listens enough to his uniformed officers."

Rumsfeld has been under heavy criticism since a soldier asked him last week why the combat vehicles used in the war in Iraq don't have the proper armor.

The Mississippi Republican told the civic club, "I'm not calling for his resignation, but I think we do need a change at some point." (AP)

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Nation

Excess Flu Shots Raise Concerns

Government weighing whether to ease restrictions on vaccine

ATLANTA | Two months after the government recommended that scarce flu shots be reserved for people most at risk, health officials are now worried that tens of thousands of doses could go to waste, and they are considering easing the restrictions.

The demand for flu shots has turned out to be lower than expected because the flu season has been mild so far. Also, it turns out that more than half of all elderly or chronically ill adults have not even tried to get vaccinated because they figured no shots would be available, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Thursday.

The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices plans to hold an emergency conference call Friday to discuss whether to amend its earlier response to the vaccine



Some waited in long lines at a pharmacy in Texas in October to receive a flu shot.

shortage and recommend that more people be allowed to get shots.

The problem is that a flu shot is only good for the flu season it is made for. Any excess must be disposed of at the end of the season.

The surplus already has prompted some states to loosen their restrictions, allowing people as young as 50 to get a shot. (AP)



BY THE NUMBERS: Sweet alcoholic drinks marketed to young people are luring teens — especially girls — to engage in underage drinking, the American Medical Association said Thursday. An AMA poll of 741 people ages 12 to 18 found that 31 percent of girls and 19 percent of boys had consumed drinks some call "alco-pop" in the past six months. (AP)

Ohio Judge Nixes Election Dispute

COLUMBUS, OHIO | The Ohio Supreme Court's chief justice on Thursday threw out a challenge to the state's presidential election results.

A lawyer for the voters bringing the case said he would refile the challenge as early as Friday.

Chief Justice Thomas Moyer ruled that the request improperly challenged two separate election results. Ohio law allows only one race to be challenged in a single complaint, he said.

The challenge was backed by the Rev. Jesse Jackson and Columbus attorney Cliff Arnebeck, who accused President Bush's campaign of "high-tech vote stealing." (AP)

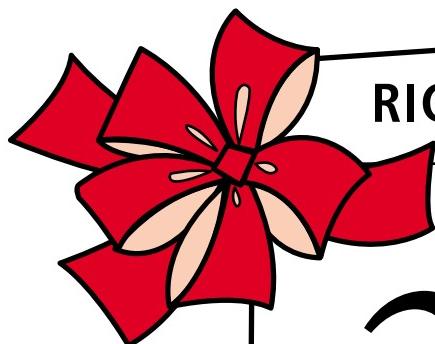
Today in The Washington Post

On the Prowl: With increasing and unnerving regularity, mountain lions have been making appearances in suburban areas in the Midwest and slowly trekking eastward. | *Metro*

Curtain Call: The old Washington Convention Center has one more show to stage — it's own destruction by a series of synchronized explosions. | *Metro*

Behind Bars: Within the prison at Guantanamo Bay, the CIA has maintained an undisclosed detention facility for valuable al Qaeda captives, sources report. | *Metro*

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World

EU Leaders OK Talks With Turkey

Membership meetings to start in October; Cyprus issue still open

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM | European Union leaders agreed Thursday to open talks with Turkey next year on eventual EU membership, despite widespread misgivings across Europe about admitting such a large, poor and mostly Muslim country.

The 25 EU leaders will propose Oct. 3, 2005, as the start date for the talks, which are expected to last for years. Turkish officials had no immediate reaction. Ankara had suggested a start date in April.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived at the EU meeting site late Thursday, presumably to discuss the proposal with key leaders. He made no comment.

"Tonight the European Union has opened its door to Turkey ...

making a balanced offer," said Jose Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission.

The prospect of Turkish membership has split governments and public opinion across the continent. For their part, the Turks have warned the bloc against imposing too many onerous conditions.



Erdogan

The dispute over the divided island of Cyprus, which joined the EU last May, could be a stumbling block. Cyprus has been split into a Turkish Cypriot north and an internationally recognized Greek Cypriot south since 1974, when Turkey invaded after an Athens-backed coup aiming to unite the island with Greece.

Only Ankara recognizes the Turkish Cypriot state in the north; it does not recognize the official government in the south. (AP)

BANGLADESH | INDEPENDENCE DAY



ORANGE CRUSH: Girls dance during an Independence Day parade in Dhaka on Thursday. Bangladeshis across the country celebrated the country's triumph in the civil war against Pakistan 33 years ago, which made Bangladesh — known then as East Pakistan — an independent nation.

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CANDY CRAZE: The deep-fried Mars bar is now an established part of the culinary scene in Scotland, according to a letter in the medical journal *The Lancet*, Reuters reported. The letter says shops sell an average of 23 bars a week, but up to 200.

In Brief

BALKANS

U.S. Imposes Sanctions on Bosnian-Serb Leaders

The United States imposed sanctions against Bosnian Serb political leaders Thursday for failing to arrest and turn over war crimes suspects to an international tribunal. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said any assets the Serbian Democratic Party has in the United States will be frozen, and party members will be banned from entering the United States. (AP)

HAITI

U.N. Troops Put Pressure on Rebels Occupying Compound

Hundreds of U.N. troops and police surrounded the estate of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide Thursday in a showdown with former soldiers who seized the abandoned compound, demanding the reinstatement of the army Aristide disbanded. The interim government warned the rebels to leave the estate near Port-au-Prince. Government negotiators arrived late Thursday to meet with the ex-soldiers. (AP)

IRELAND

Pope Defrocks 2 Priests Convicted for Sexual Abuse

Pope John Paul II has defrocked two priests convicted of sexually abusing children in Ireland, an unprecedented move in this predominantly Catholic nation, church officials confirmed Thursday. The church declined to identify either man. The church rarely defrocks priests, even those found guilty of crimes. (AP)

INDONESIA

Terror Warnings Prompt Hilton to Ramp Up Security

Hilton hotels in Indonesia tightened security Thursday at their three properties after authorities ordered a nationwide crackdown following warnings from foreign governments that terrorists were preparing to launch attacks on Western targets. Australia said it had "credible information" that terrorists could be targeting the Hilton Hotel chain. The United States, Britain, New Zealand and Japan also issued warnings, but did not mention specific targets. (AP)

Defiant: Yanukovych says he won't accept a victory by Yushchenko in Dec. 26 vote | Today's Post: Section A

40%

The percentage of Brazilian adults who are considered overweight, while another 11 percent are obese, according to a new government study. The culprits appear to be poor diet and lack of exercise, Reuters reported.

World

Top British Court Harshly Condemns Anti-Terror Law

LONDON | Britain's highest court harshly condemned on Thursday one of the most hotly disputed elements of the country's anti-terror strategy — a law allowing some foreign terrorism suspects to be locked up indefinitely with no charge.

The government, however, said 11 suspects in detention under the disputed provision of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act would stay in prison until it decides what to do about the ruling.

In a powerfully worded 8-1 decision, the judges said the law is disproportionate and discriminates against immigrants and foreigners.

"The real threat to the life of the nation ... comes not from terrorism but from laws such as these," wrote Lord Hoffman, one of a nine-judge panel in the House of Lords. (AP)

BELGIUM | HOMAGE TO VICTORY



YVES LOGGHE/AP

OUT OF THE MIST: An American honor guard marches with the Stars and Stripes at the end of a ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the start of the Battle of the Bulge, in which 500,000 U.S. forces helped defeat Nazi Germany's last bid to reverse the advance of allied forces toward Berlin, at the Mardasson World War II Memorial in Bastogne on Thursday.

Saddam Has First Talk With Lawyer

Meanwhile, country's Justice Minister says trials should be delayed

BAGHDAD | Saddam Hussein met with a defense lawyer Thursday for the first time since his capture a year ago, days before several of his top aides are due to appear in court for hearings on alleged war crimes.

The unidentified attorney spent four hours with the 67-year-old former dictator at Saddam's undisclosed detention site, said his chief lawyer, Ziad al-Khasawneh.

"He was in good health and his morale was high and very strong," al-Khasawneh said. In Baghdad, a U.S. military official familiar with

the case confirmed Saddam was visited by a lawyer for the first time since being hauled from his "spider hole" near Tikrit on Dec. 13, 2003.

Interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi said Tuesday that the proceedings against Saddam's lieutenants could begin as early as next week. But the government's push to begin the trials before the Jan. 30 national elections has led to dissent even within the Iraqi Cabinet.

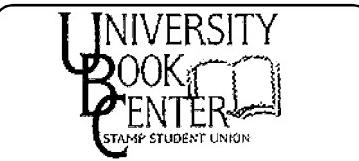
"Trials as symbolic as those against the dignitaries of the former regime should only start after the establishment of an Iraqi government with ballot-box legitimacy," Iraqi Justice Minister Malik Dohan al-Hassan told the Geneva daily newspaper Le Temps. (AP)

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Money

Report Roils Fannie Mae

SEC cites D.C.-based mortgage giant for accounting violations

WASHINGTON | Speculation swirled Thursday over the futures of Fannie Mae's top executives after regulators cited the mortgage giant for accounting violations going back to 2001. Lawmakers, meanwhile, called for tighter government reins on the company.

A review by the Securities and Exchange Commission found that the government-sponsored compa-

ny must restate earnings because it violated accounting rules for derivatives, which are used to hedge against interest-rate swings, and for some loan transactions.

Whether Fannie Mae's top executives, particularly chairman Franklin Raines and chief financial officer Timothy Howard, will remain in their jobs became an increasingly pointed question after SEC chief accountant Donald Nicolaisen disclosed the findings of the agency's review late Wednesday.

The two executives defended the company's accounting in sworn tes-

timony at a congressional hearing in October and rejected allegations of accounting improprieties and management misdeeds.

The developments could force Raines and Howard out of their jobs, said analyst Edwin Groshans of investment banking firm Fox-Pitt, Kelton. Otherwise, he said, "They're just going to be a lightning rod."

The SEC probe continues, and the Justice Department is pursuing a criminal probe into the accounting of Fannie Mae, the biggest U.S. buyer and guarantor of home mortgages. (AP)

New Software Powerhouse As Symantec, Veritas Merge

SAN FRANCISCO | Computer security giant Symantec Corp. is buying storage and backup program specialist Veritas Software Corp. to create the world's fourth-largest software maker, marking the latest merger in an industry trend that's expected to compress the competition to a few juggernauts.

The all-stock acquisition, announced Thursday, was initially valued at \$13.5 billion, but the price quickly plummeted amid investor worries that the deal signals a sales

slowdown at Symantec, the maker of the popular Norton-branded software that fights computer viruses.

Even as the stock market puzzled over why Symantec decided to branch outside computer security to buy a slower growing company in Veritas, some analysts praised the deal for creating a more diversified firm better equipped to compete with the likes of Microsoft Corp. and IBM Corp.

Relatively few layoffs are expected after the merger. (AP)

Coke to Debut 3 New Drinks in '05

ST. LOUIS | Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc. plans to launch three new drinks and improve its diet drink business next year.

During a conference call with analysts, CEO John R. Alm said the new products are an energy drink called Full Throttle, additional Dasani water flavors, and an unnamed innovation in regular soft drinks. Chairman Lowry F. Kline also said the company sees "opportunities" that will help the company address health and wellness trends in the market. (AP)

Market Action

New York Stock Exchange

Gainers

STOCK	LAST	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY PERCENT CHANGE
-------	------	--------------	----------------------

IntegES	4.48	.58	+14.9
---------	------	-----	-------

Patina s	36.61	+4.69	+14.7
----------	-------	-------	-------

ViadCp s	28.20	+3.10	+12.4
----------	-------	-------	-------

Unif	3.58	.29	+8.8
------	------	-----	------

KrspKrm	11.55	.92	+8.7
---------	-------	-----	------

Losers

McAfee	29.23	-3.48	-10.6
--------	-------	-------	-------

Gateway	5.85	-.59	-9.2
---------	------	------	------

OrbitalSci	11.14	-1.10	-9.0
------------	-------	-------	------

BearingPt	7.75	-.73	-8.6
-----------	------	------	------

Glamis	17.75	-1.42	-7.4
--------	-------	-------	------

NASDAQ Stock Market

Gainers

STOCK	LAST	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY PERCENT CHANGE
-------	------	--------------	----------------------

AehrTest	3.31	+.81	+32.4
----------	------	------	-------

MFRI	9.08	+1.97	+27.7
------	------	-------	-------

Abrams	5.39	+1.14	+26.8
--------	------	-------	-------

Novmr g	47.54	+8.47	+21.7
---------	-------	-------	-------

HubGrp	52.46	+8.75	+20.0
--------	-------	-------	-------

Losers

Mossimo	2.99	-.48	-13.9
---------	------	------	-------

Volterra n	21.10	-3.33	-13.6
------------	-------	-------	-------

EchelonC	9.46	-1.24	-11.6
----------	------	-------	-------

MulFnElc n	19.62	-2.31	-10.5
------------	-------	-------	-------

RankGrp	10.27	-1.18	-10.3
---------	-------	-------	-------

DOW

+14.19

+0.13

10705.64

NASDAQ

-16.40

-0.76

2146.15

S&P 500

-2.51

-0.21

1203.21

Pharmacy Stocks

STOCK	LAST	DAILY CHANGE	YEAR TO DATE PERCENT CHANGE
Allergan	79.80	-.18	+3.9
AstraZen	40.21	+.52	-16.9
BarrPhm s	45.23	-.27	-11.8
BrMySq	25.56	+.53	-10.6
ForestLab	46.70	+.130	-24.4
Hospira n	33.42	-.15	+19.4
IvaxCp s	15.80	-.19	...
JohnJn	63.45	+.255	+22.8
LillyEli	57.40	+.68	-18.4
Merck	31.79	+.131	-31.2
MylanLab	17.98	-.03	-28.8
Pfize	28.98	+.66	-18.0
SchergPl	20.46	+.51	+17.7
Sepracor	55.30	+.485	+131.1
Wyeth	41.69	+.109	-1.8

Rates

	CURRENT	PREVIOUS WEEK	TODAY	PREVIOUS DAY	YEAR AGO
Prime Rate	5.25	5.00	.5179	.5147	.5696
Fed Funds close	2.25	2.0625	1.2335	1.2257	1.3248
3-month	2.16	2.20	.7548	.7456	.8105
2-year	2.99	2.92	104.78	104.23	107.43
10-year	4.19	4.17	11.2470	11.1715	11.2545
30-year	4.82	4.83	32.47	32.27	34.01

Currency (Dollars in foreign currency)

	CURRENT	PREVIOUS WEEK	TODAY	PREVIOUS DAY	YEAR AGO
British Pound	.5179	.5147	.5696		
Canadian Dollar	1.2335	1.2257	1.3248		
European Euro	.7548	.7456	.8105		
Japanese Yen	104.78	104.23	107.43		
Mexican Peso	11.2470	11.1715	11.2545		
Taiwanese Dollar	32.47	32.27	34.01		

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Local



FREE RIDE: Metro ran 10 eight-car trains Thursday morning to help carry up to 30,000 extra riders expected to take a free trip paid for by online bank ING Direct. Service on bus, rail and MetroAccess had no significant delays, Metro said.

Gun Goes Off on Blue Line

Metro reports number of robberies on the rise

WASHINGTON | Despite an overall drop in crime, the number of robberies in the Metro system is up sharply, authorities revealed Thursday — the same day a shot was fired after a robbery on a Blue Line train.

That happened shortly after Thursday morning's rush hour, on a train that left the Stadium-Armory station inbound for Prince George's County, Md. The suspect approached

the victim, pulled a gun and demanded his coat and backpack, according to Transit Police Chief Polly Hanson. The victim surrendered his belongings, but told police the robber was then playing around with the gun when it went off.

"We have found a hole in the floor" of the train, Hanson said. "No one was hurt." The suspect remained on the loose late Thursday.

Robberies jumped 25 percent this

year, and there are also more thefts, according to Metro Transit Police. Police reported 267 robberies from Jan. 1 to Nov. 30, compared to the 214 during the same period last year. Hanson said the attacks happened at various times and locations.

"That's what makes it very difficult. If you have something that happens at the same station, same time or the same geographical area, you can do a very strategic focused deployment," Hanson said.

CANDACE SMITH (AP)

Security Guard Charged With Starting Md. Arson

Authorities still have no motive behind Charles County blazes

BALTIMORE | A security guard on duty when fires caused \$10 million in damage at a housing development under construction was arrested Thursday on arson charges, the U.S. attorney's office said.

Aaron L. Speed, 21, of Waldorf, will appear Friday morning before a magistrate in federal court in Greenbelt, according to a statement released by prosecutors.

The motive was not immediately known and a spokeswoman for the

U.S. attorney's office said she did not know how many arson charges Speed faced.

Speed is an employee of Security Services of America, a company hired to guard the upscale Hunters Brooke development in southern Maryland.

The fires broke out there early Dec. 6. No one was hurt in the blazes, but 10 houses were destroyed and 16 others were damaged.

Because of the size of the 10-acre crime scene, authorities believe at least two people are responsible for the arsons.

No information was available Thursday on additional suspects.

BRIAN WITTE (AP)

ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT

"In a recent study, the CIO Council found that less than 15 percent of more than 19,000 federal IT workers have extensive knowledge in e-government."

(Source: GCN, 2004)

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WHO KNEW? Robert S. Bloxom became Virginia's first secretary of agriculture Thursday, taking charge of duties such as testing gas pumps and milk storage. (AP)

NATIONAL ZOO | SMALL WONDERS



ESSIE COHEN/NATIONAL ZOO/AP

A NEW HOME? The Friends of the National Zoo are seeking funds for a new habitat at the zoo in Washington D.C., for three pairs of Asian small-clawed otters — the smallest of the world's 13 otter species.

The Lotteries

Thursday, Dec. 16

DISTRICT

Mid-day Lucky Numbers	4-6-7
Evening Lucky Numbers	6-9-3
Mid-day DC 4	7-4-4-2
Evening DC 4	4-2-2-7
Quick Cash	16-9-13-18-32-20
Hot Five	31-22-32-6-33
Hot Lotto (Wed.)	2-4-10-26-29 (18)

MARYLAND

Mid-day Pick 3	3-9-5
Evening Pick 3	4-0-6
Mid-day Pick 4	8-1-9-3
Evening Pick 4	0-4-5-7
Match 5	2-6-21-26-31 Bonus: 37
Lotto (Wed.)	6-19-20-29-30-35

VIRGINIA

Mid-day Pick 3 (Thurs.)	9-5-7
Evening Pick 3 (Wed.)	9-4-4
Mid-day Pick 4 (Thurs.)	1-0-4-5

Evening Pick 4 (Wed.) **I-7-1-3**

Mid-day Cash 5 (Thurs.) **I-5-6-8-16**

Evening Cash 5 (Wed.) **18-19-25-30-31**

Lotto South (Wed.) **8-19-20-35-42-45**

MULTI-STATE GAMES

Powerball (Wed.) **I-6-II-38-53 (II)**

Power Play **4**

All winning numbers are official only when validated at a lottery ticket location or a lottery claims office. Drawings that occur after Express's deadline will be published two days later.

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Offer ends 1/31/05 and is available in the continental United States. Must be a new, first-time DISH Network residential customer. All prices, packages and programming subject to change without notice. Local and state sales taxes may apply. Where applicable, monthly equipment rental fees and programming are taxed separately. All DISH Network programming, and any other services that are provided, are subject to the terms and conditions of the promotional agreement and Residential Customer Agreement, available at www.dishnetwork.com or upon request. Local Channels packages by satellite are only available to customers who reside in the specified local Designated Market Area (DMA). Certain local channels may require an additional dish antenna from DISH Network, installed free of any charges. SuperDISH antenna may be required to receive local channels and will be included at no additional charge with subscription to local channels. Significant restrictions apply to DISH Network hardware and programming availability, and for all offers. Social Security Numbers are used to obtain credit scores and will not be released to third parties except for verification and collection purposes or if required by governmental authorities. See your DISH Network Retailer, DISH Network product literature or the DISH Network website at www.dishnetwork.com for complete details and restrictions. All service marks and trademarks belong to their respective owners.

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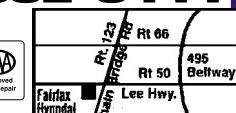
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**REDSKINS**

Fitting In: LaVar Arrington returns to a stellar defense without any stars | **15**

COLLEGE HOOPS

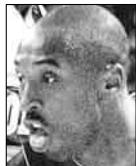
A-Team: George Washington is the class of the Atlantic 10 under coach Karl Hobbs | **14**

Sports**Weekend**

CLOSED FOR BUSINESS: Employees pack up Washington Nationals baseball merchandise at the team's store located in the parking lot of RFK Stadium on Thursday.

TV Lineup

→ **GOLD FEVER:** The Redskins try to improve to 5-9, and perhaps more importantly, avoid the major embarrassment of losing to the 49ers on Saturday (5 p.m. on Fox).



→ **COAST TO COAST:** After losing two straight to the Miami Heat, the Washington Wizards start a West Coast swing against Kobe Bryant and the L.A. Lakers on Friday (10:30 p.m. on Comcast). It doesn't get easier from there, as the Wizards visit the Phoenix Suns on Saturday (9 p.m. on WB50).

BRYANT
PAUL MARTINEZ/MONSVIA/AP

→ **OUT OF THEIR SHELLS:** The University of Maryland and Florida State open up play in the ACC on Sunday (6 p.m. on Comcast).

→ **RECORD TIME:** Peyton Manning could break Dan Marino's single-season touchdown record against the Baltimore Ravens on Sunday night (8:30 p.m. on ESPN).



JEFF ROBBERSON/AP

Colts quarterback Peyton Manning has thrown for 46 touchdowns this season.

Collectors' Items

Fans gather Nationals souvenirs as team's employees play waiting game

D.C. BASEBALL | For a team that has suspended much of its operations, the Washington Nationals were a brisk source of commerce Thursday — at least in sporting goods stores.

Caps in pink, red and blue and other Nationals merchandise accounted for an above-average take of about \$3,000 at City Sports, where customers hedged their bets over whether their haul might someday be valuable.

"I think it's a good souvenir in case the team goes the way of the Edsel," said Brent Miller of Arlington, Va., who bought two hats bearing the team's curly "W" insignia.

It was a day of mixed feelings for baseball fans in the nation's capital as they digested the complicated financial permutations of the week's news.

For three months, there has been the promise that they would have a major league team to call their own next spring for the first time since 1971. Now the dream is on hold following the District of Columbia Council's demand that taxpayers pay no more than half the cost of a new ballpark.

Baseball's response was to halt promotional, marketing and sales operations. The official team store was closed Wednesday night.

Tickets are no longer for sale and refunds are being offered. There's a Dec. 31 deadline to resolve the dispute. For the team's employees, life is suddenly a waiting game.

Activity was slow Thursday in the team's temporary offices, with special assistant Kevin Uhlich using the time to catch up on paperwork. Normally he would be planning for a scheduled meeting Friday with the D.C. Sports and Entertainment Commission, but it is one of many that have been canceled.

Baseball announced Thursday

that the team's "baseball operations will proceed," meaning that general manager Jim Bowden will continue to put together a roster for opening day — wherever the team ends up.

However, the chances of any significant signing — a badly needed starting pitcher, for example — have waned because the team's revenue stream is again uncertain.

Bowden declined comment Thursday, but team president Tony Tavares said there were no signings imminent this week anyway.

"Are we being more cautious? Yes," Tavares said. JOSEPH WHITE (AP)

■ **Stepping in:** Sources say that Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig will take a larger role in the stadium dispute in the District | washingtonpost.com

THEFT | **Cleaning Up** A janitor was charged with stealing more than 100 Olympic medals and other memorabilia from the International Swimming Hall of Fame. Police said on Wednesday that Paul Nichols Christow, 48, used his unfettered access to swipe



the medals from the museum's collection. Christow's scheme was discovered after the medals were sold to a collector over the Internet. The collector contacted the Hall of Fame after acquiring medals won by Johnny Weissmuller, who played Tarzan in the movies. (AP)

→ **LATE TIP-OFF:** Jarrett Jack leads the No. 3 Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets against No. 22 Gonzaga in the Las Vegas Showdown Saturday night (12:30 a.m. on ESPN).

→ **FIGHT NIGHT:** Light heavyweights Antonio Tarver (22-2-0) and Glen Johnson (41-9-2) headline the boxing card in L.A. Saturday (9 p.m. on HBO).

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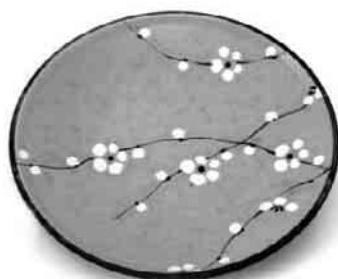
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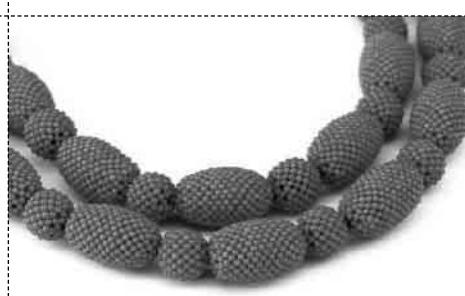


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George Washington coach Karl Hobbs has the Colonials ranked No. 19 this year.

Hobbs, Colonials Chase Down Wins

Coach has No. 19 GW thinking about a trip to NCAA tournament

COLLEGE HOOPS | Three years ago, the best reason to go to a George Washington basketball game was to watch first-year coach Karl Hobbs throw a tantrum.

"My antics on the sidelines, stomping, jumping up and down — the students, they love that," Hobbs said. "The first year, I think they were coming just to see that, to see how high I was going to jump in the air."

Now the students come to see a Colonials team ranked in the Top 25 for the first time this millennium. Hobbs has cajoled the program out of the shadow of the scandalous final days of the Tom Penders era to a No. 19 ranking in this week's AP poll.

The NCAA tournament is a distinct possibility for GW in a down year for the Atlantic 10 conference. Traditional powers Xavier, Dayton and St. Joseph's are not to be found in the national rankings, leaving the Colonials to carry the banner. In fact, George Washington (6-1) doesn't have a ranked team on its schedule for the rest of the season.

Not so fast, said Hobbs, whose team topped Michigan State and Maryland in the BB&T Classic in December.

"We have yet to go to Dayton and even be in the game, forget win the game," Hobbs said. "We're chasing. That's the whole thing of our season. We're chasing Xavier. We're chasing Dayton. We're chasing St. Joe's. We're chasing Richmond. We're trying to become consistent winners. We want to be consistently a team that wins 20 games a year."

JOSEPH WHITE (AP)



BY THE NUMBERS: In his first two years at George Washington, Hobbs led the Colonials to just 12 wins. But the former University of Connecticut assistant enjoyed his first winning season last year, as the team finished with an 18-12 record. (AP)

No-Name Heroes

REDSKINS | When LaVar Arrington returns to the Washington Redskins lineup, he'd best avoid the "Midnight Train to Georgia."

The dynamic three-time Pro Bowl linebacker, expected to take the field for a few plays Saturday at San Francisco after missing 11 weeks with a knee injury, will find he's now part of a very unLaVar scheme.

"Gladys Knight and the Pips can only take you so far," assistant coach Greg Blache said Thursday. "You're going to need more than one star and a bunch of backup singers."

The Redskins defense is ranked second in the NFL, a remarkable achievement by defensive coaches Gregg Williams and Blache when considering that projected key contributors Arrington, Mike Barrow, Phillip Daniels, Matt Bowen and Andre Lott have all missed large chunks of time due to injuries.

But, as Williams and Blache have stressed all along, this defense puts team ahead of individuals. Ever hear anything about



SWARM: The Redskins' no-name defense shuts down the Giants' Tiki Barber.

Antonio Pierce? Lemar Marshall? Ryan Clark? Joe Salave'a? Demetric Evans? All they do is exactly what they're supposed to do. They get into position and make basic defensive plays that keep the other teams from moving the ball. Nothing flashy. No ESPN highlights. Just good team defense.

"It's not a hero defense," cornerback Fred Smoot said.

The downside from the system is that some solid, high-quality play has flown under the radar and probably won't get noticed when Pro Bowl spots are awarded.

Arrington was upgraded Thursday from questionable to probable on the injury report. The Redskins plan to work him slowly into the lineup, playing mostly on nickel packages against the 49ers.

Arrington is eager to play, and he feels there'll be room for both his unique individual Gladys Knight talents in the framework of a Temptations team.

"How many teams have a LaVar? I would hope that it's one of a kind," Arrington said. "I go out

Redskins
Keys to the Game



HE'S BACK: Arrington will play for the first time since September.



DEC. 18: vs. 49ers
5 p.m. (Fox)

→ **THROW DEEP:** Against the lowly 49ers, there is no excuse to have Patrick Ramsey play it safe.

→ **WINNING FORMULA:** When Clinton Portis gets 100 yards, the Redskins win.

When will this register with the team?
→ **TURN UP THE PRESSURE:** The Redskins' defense ought to have a field day collecting sacks and turnovers.

there and play just like they play. Certain players have a certain flair."

JOSEPH WHITE (AP)



Retiree: Brian Mitchell plans to re-sign with the Redskins in the offseason for one-day so he can retire with the team he played 10 seasons with | Today's Post, Sports

Jets, Seahawks Battle For Spots in Playoffs

NFL PICKS | If the New York Jets were in the NFC, they would probably have a playoff spot already.

Instead, they still have a fight on their hands as they play host Sunday to Seattle, which has won two fewer games, but leads the NFC West.

As befitting the difference between the conferences, the Jets are favored by six points even though Chad Pennington is playing with an injured throwing shoulder.

The Jets are 9-4 and lead the wild-card chase in the AFC. But they've lost to the best teams they've played: New England, Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Buffalo.

Is Seattle good?

Its defense is certainly spotty, although Michael Boulware intercepted a pass in the end zone to help seal a 27-23 win in Minnesota last week. The Seahawks got lucky then.

They could get lucky again.

Name That Score

More picks from the AP:

Colts (minus 8) 27, Ravens 23
Panthers (plus 3.5) 20, Falcons 19
Patriots (minus 9.5) 20, Dolphins 7
Lions (plus 3) 22, Vikings 20
Packers (minus 3.5) 16, Jags 14
Steelers (minus 10) 27, Giants 2
Eagles (minus 12.5) 33, Cowboys 17
Chargers (minus 10) 31, Browns 10
Bills (minus 1.5) 31, Bengals 23
Cardinals (plus 3) 20, Rams 17
Redskins (minus 4) 20, 49ers 3
Chiefs (minus 1) 27, Broncos 24
Bucs (minus 7.5) 28, Saints 23
Texans (plus 1) 15, Bears 15

Giants Stadium is usually windy at this time of year, which could accentuate Pennington's shoulder problems.

On conference difference:
JETS, 24-20. DAVE GOLDBERG (AP)

HEALTHY ADULT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The non-profit Henry M. Jackson Foundation is conducting an investigational vaccine study at its clinic in Rockville, Maryland in collaboration with the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. This research study will evaluate an investigational vaccine to provide protection against anthrax—an important concern for U.S. public health and national security in the aftermath of terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

The investigational vaccine is not made from anthrax and study participants will not be exposed to the infectious bacteria in any way.

You may be eligible for this study if you are generally healthy and:

- 18 to 40 years old
- A citizen or permanent resident of the United States
- Not in the military or the reserves

Participants will receive study-related medical supervision, physical exams, laboratory services and tests at no charge. Compensation will be provided for the required study visits.

For more information, contact: Keisha, Kathleen or MJ at the Henry M. Jackson Foundation

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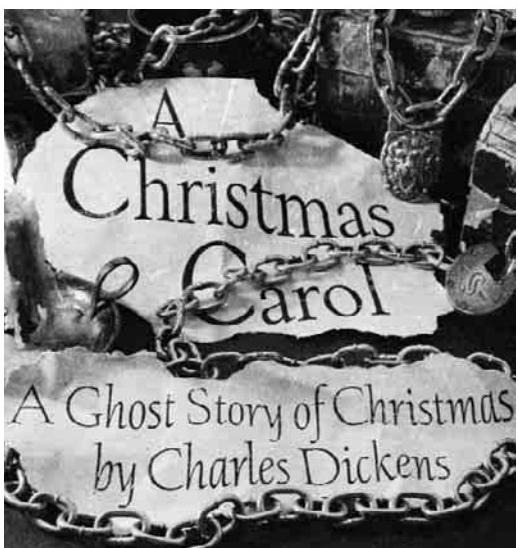
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Weekend | Sports

Dukes of the Gridiron

James Madison must stop Montana QB for its first championship

COLLEGE FOOTBALL | Craig Ochs is one game away from the perfect ending to his collegiate career.

Ochs, who transferred to Montana from Colorado in January 2003, leads the Grizzlies (12-2) against James Madison (12-2) in the Division I-AA championship game on Friday night.

"It's been awesome," Ochs said Thursday. "A storybook ending."

Ochs ranked fifth in I-AA in total offense at 272 yards a game and second in pass efficiency with 166 and has the Grizzlies in the championship for the fifth time in school history, looking for their third title.

Meanwhile, the Dukes made history in their bid for the school's first title. James Madison is the first team to win all its playoff games on the road. "We've traveled the rough



STEVE HELBER/AP
James Madison QB Justin Rascati is lifted up after beating William & Mary last week.

road," James Madison coach Mickey Matthews said.

The Dukes lead the nation with 16 sacks this season, and they have blocked seven kicks.

James Madison's leading tack-

ler is a freshman, free safety Tony LeZotte, who also was recruited by some SEC and ACC schools. "I'm surprised at our success," LeZotte said. "It's just crazy, but it is a great feeling." ELIZABETH A. DAVIS (AP)

Hurry! Ends Jan 2!



Jones is suing Conte for \$25 million.

Jones Challenges Conte to Lie Test

DOPING | Olympic track star Marion Jones, who has filed a defamation lawsuit against Victor Conte, on Thursday challenged the BALCO head to take a lie detector test regarding his charges that she used performance-enhancing drugs.

Jones' attorneys want three questions asked of Conte:

Did he observe Jones injecting herself with performance enhancing drugs on April 21, 2001?

Has he ever leaked any grand jury testimony or other evidence related to the BALCO investigation?

Has he ever observed Marion Jones illegally taking any performance-enhancing drugs? (AP)

A's, Braves Complete Major Deal for Hudson

Atlanta beats out L.A., Boston and Yankees to acquire top pitcher

BASEBALL | Tim Hudson was traded from the Oakland Athletics to Atlanta, a blockbuster deal Thursday that further bolstered the Braves' revamped rotation.

With Los Angeles, Boston and the New York Yankees rumored to be pursuing Hudson, the Braves swooped in and got the Oakland ace for outfielder Charles Thomas and pitchers

Juan Cruz and Dan Meyer.

It was Atlanta's second big trade in a week. Last Saturday, the Braves acquired All-Star closer Dan Kolb from Milwaukee — a move that allowed them to move John Smoltz back into the rotation.

"This winter, we have set our sights on going back to sort of the old-fashioned Braves' way of building championship teams with dominant pitching," Atlanta general manager John Schuerholz said. "That's what we think we have done." (AP)

Slugger Beltre Finds Home in Seattle

BASEBALL | Prized free agent Adrian Beltre and the Seattle Mariners agreed to a \$64 million, five-year deal Thursday, The Associated Press learned.

Beltre's contract is contingent upon his passing a physical, a person close to the third baseman said, speaking on condition

of anonymity.

The deal could be announced as early as Friday.

A day earlier, the Mariners added another slugger by finalizing a \$50 million, four-year contract with free-agent first baseman Richie Sexson, who was also sought by the Baltimore Orioles. (AP)

Gift Guide

Stuffing Spots

Some stores just scream "stocking stuffer." They're crammed with wee, fun items — retro gag gifts, picture frames, novelty soap, kitchen gizmos and, for some reason, the near-ubiquitous Freud action figure. Here are our picks for the best stocking-stuffer stores in the area.

ARLINGTON GIFT AND GARDEN

Currently dominated by Christmas goodies. (2727 Wilson Blvd.; 703-527-3828; Court House and Clarendon metro stations.)

THE BLUE HOUSE

Toys crowd the back wall; glassware, bags and knick-knacks fill the shelves. (7770 Woodmont Ave.; 301-656-6088; Bethesda Metro.)

CONTAINER STORE

Even big-box haters can't say the Container Store doesn't have great stocking stuffers. (See containerstore.com for locations.)

GINZA

Scoop up Japanese snacks, toys, stationery, chopsticks and more. (1721 Connecticut Ave. NW; 202-331-7991; Dupont Circle Metro.)

HOME RULE

Score glassware, bath goods and kitchen gear, all super-stylish. (1807 14th St NW; 202-797-5544.)



EAT EASIER

Shovel it in while building dexterity. Home Rule and Wake Up Little Suzie have clothespin chopsticks in several opaque colors (\$4 to \$5 each); Container Store has 'em in translucent pastels (\$3).

PULP

The name suggests paper, and there's a lot of that, but also random novelties aplenty. (1803 14th St NW; 202-462-7857 and 303 Pennsylvania Ave. SE; 202-543-1924; Capitol South Metro.)

WAKE UP LITTLE SUZIE

WUSL offers boho baby gifts, jewelry, tons o' picture frames and tchotchkies galore. (3409 Connecticut Ave NW; 202-244-0700; Cleveland Park Metro.)

WORLD MARKET

Give, then eat, exotic spreads, candy, baking mixes and more from abroad. Plus, there's rack upon rack of wine and beer. (See costplus.com for locations.)



LIGHT ICE

Like a firefly or a tragic hero, these light-up plastic ice cubes don't live very long — the battery lasts eight hours and can't be replaced. But for those eight hours, they shine brightly, and in different colors. At Home Rule (\$4 each) and Arlington Gift and Garden (4 for \$10).



NOT JUST FOR TREES

You can't go wrong with non-season-specific ornaments, which can dangle from rearview mirrors long after the tree is put away. From Wake Up Little Suzie: Lunch box, \$10; nail polish, \$10; masked wrestler, \$8.

SUGAR SHOCK

America's four varieties of Snickers pale beside Canada's frothy Aero bar and Australia's freeze-dried ice-cream-esque Violet Crumble. (World Market, \$1.30 to \$1.80)



USE ME

Unboring essentials: Sewing kit, Pulp, \$5.50; spiral luggage tag (\$6), soap sheets (\$6) and key caps (\$3 for four), Container Store.

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Finish your shopping at a very special mall: Reagan Nat'l Airport

There are people you care so little for that you cannot help but put off — or completely forget — buying them a holiday gift. But no worries: There are opportunities for mindless last-minute purchases at any time, including the six minutes before your flight leaves from Reagan National Airport. Just tally up the crowd at your destination, determine who's left out and buy 'til you fly. Bonus: For visiting guests who are low on your list, we give you a selection of airport-inspired gifts (at right) straight from the mall.

When it comes to proudly showing off one's preferences, nothing is as classy as small metal representations clipped to your cuffs. From pool balls to hot cars to scantily clad women, Tie Rack has a set of macho, \$30 **CUFF LINKS** to match.

A **PLUSH COPPERHEAD** (\$12, National Zoo Store) is all the fun of smuggling with a venomous snake without the extensive tissue damage and scarring. After a few nights of bunking with your sibling's screeching offspring, you may wish you'd sprung for the real thing.

"Boy oh boy, are you slow. Are you walking against gale-force winds?" While we can't promise such witty quips out of the **TALKING PEDOMETER** (\$25, Brookstone), the lucky recipient might take the subtle hint and head out for a stroll, thus getting out of your hair for a bit.

Corruption always gets the big laughs. Which is why the **BORROWED FROM THE LINCOLN BEDROOM T-SHIRT** (\$20, America!) is a sure-fire hit: First come the chuckles, later, solemn reflection on campaign-finance reform.

The **AIRPORT PLAYSET** (\$17, National Geographic Store) makes it painfully obvious how low your second-cousin's nephew is prioritized in your giving hierarchy. With this clearly from-the-concourse gift, the kids can learn what it's like to wait at the security gate for an hour.



► **NATIONAL HYGIENE**

Your visiting loved ones crave the nationalistic toiletries found at Reagan National's America! store—but you're not going to the airport! Don't panic: Stop by America! at Pentagon City mall for a White House toothbrush (\$1.69) and First Lady emery board (\$2.49).



► **VERY ABSORBING**

Celebrate the white, male visages of U.S. history with America!'s linen Presidents of the United States towel (\$6). Warning: The way the towel hangs when folded prominently features Richard Nixon's smiling face.



► **JUST PLANE GOOD**

Simulate the airport diet of wildly overpriced sugar water and congealed fat with Cinnabon (\$4.25) and Snapple (\$7.50 for three) lip glosses. (Claire's Boutique, see claires.com for area locations.)

If there's a career gal on your last-minute list, ask yourself two things: Is she a professional businesswoman? And, is she a prostitute? Either way, the **WORKING GIRLS SURVIVAL KIT** (\$50 at Women Rock!) will delight. Although you may think a gainfully employed female might need a personal organizer or pen set to survive, this cosmetics kit suggests that a pretty face is her true key to success. While you're at it, pick up a \$30 **SET OF GLASSES** shaped like curvy bikini babes.

If you haven't noticed, divisive partisanship is definitely in. Don't let your loved ones miss out; head to the Smithsonian Store and get them a slate of political party-specific **PARKING SIGNS** (\$14), **LICENSE PLATES** (\$7) or **MOUSE PADS** (\$10). And everyone will fondly recall

Frances Folsom Cleveland while munching on the **FIRST LADIES CHOCOLATE SET** (\$8). For the strict constructionist of the family, don't forget a **MINI-CONSTITUTION** (\$3).

OK, OK, so there are plenty of tasteful gifts available as well, such as **CASHMERE-LINED LEATHER GLOVES** (\$70, Wilson's Leather) and **HERBAL COMFORT PACKS** (\$24, Crabtree & Evelyn). And there are bajillions of **WATCHES** for sale, which you can have personalized at the Silver & Gold Connection. It takes only a few minutes, but at \$8 a letter, first and last initial will do. As it is unwrapped, don't forget to off-handedly mention the "lengthy handcrafted etching process." After all, if you want the "good" sofa, you've got to keep your hosts happy. CHRIS MINCHER (EXPRESS)

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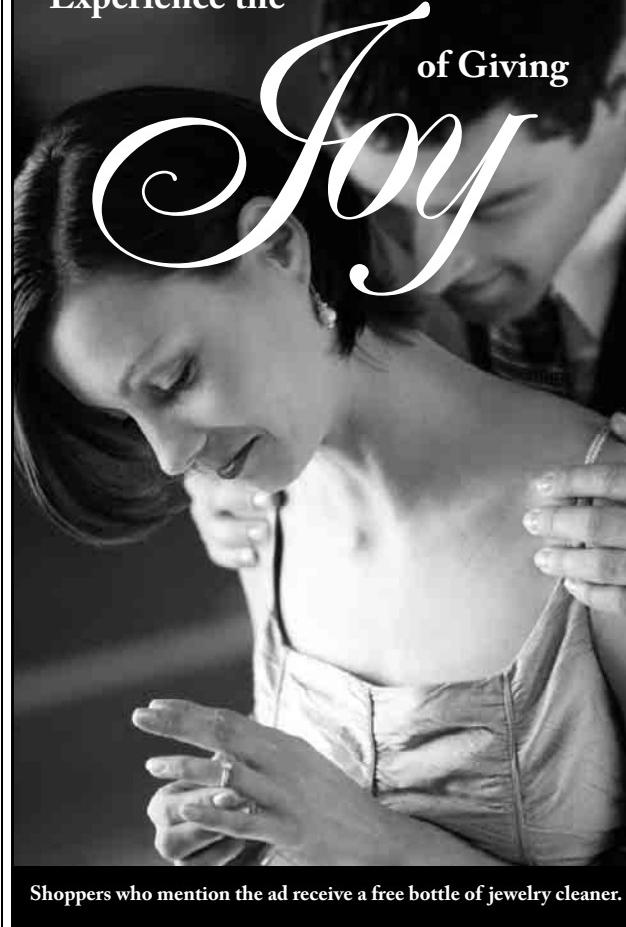
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Gift Guide

Aspirational Spending

**Show you care with
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There are certain boxes that don't need wrapping. Robin's-egg blue lends gravitas to whatever is inside, even if you've swiped an old box from the closet and put running socks inside. But most people don't want to take out a second mortgage to achieve the oomph, the power, the — if we dare break out the French — *cachet* of Tiffany-level gift-giving. So we are proud to present the low end of high-end stores — presents \$75 or under from instantly recognizable names. For when labels matter.

When you next hop the pond, you could carry the ratty old contact case from your eye doctor's office. Or, you could turn to your com-



↑ Tiffany paperweight, \$65.

A black and silver **VERSACE RING** (\$55) will show the world that jewelry doesn't have to be large to be ostentatious. But if she wants to advertise her Versace-ness, the gold and black **LEATHER LOGO KEYCHAIN** (\$75) is better. (Tyson's Galleria, 703-448-5554.)

Tiffany & Co. can be an intimidating place. They have a number of wallet-friendly gifts, however — like the **ELSA PERETTI HEART-SHAPED PAPERWEIGHT** (\$65, in red or blue). Here's the thing: Get this for any woman but your girlfriend, because your girlfriend will think it's an engagement ring. Yes, we know the box is the wrong size. Yes, we know a paperweight is heavier than a ring. It doesn't matter. Once your girlfriend opens the blue box, this very nice gift becomes the Paperweight that Wasn't an Engagement Ring, and no one needs one of those. (8045 Leesburg Pike, Vienna; 703-893-7700 and 5500 Wisconsin Ave., Chevy Chase; 301-657-8777.)

This shopper was amazed that Cartier let her in without a credit check. Most of the jewelry cost more than her car, but the fragrances were within range of her checking account. **PANTHERE DE CARTIER EAU LEGERE EAU DE TOILETTE** (\$60) is a refined scent for any woman, provided she can pronounce the name. There's also **CARTIER POUR HOMME** (\$74) so that men can at least smell like they can afford Cartier. (Tyson's Galleria, 703-749-4664 and 5454 Wisconsin Avenue, Chevy Chase; 301-654-5858.) KRISTEN PAGE

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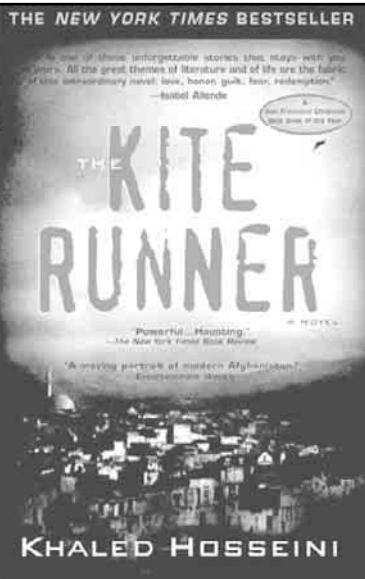
↑ Coach contact lens case, \$48.

panion, say, "Boy, this airplane air sure dries out my lenses!" and pull out the **COACH EMBOSSED SIGNATURE LENS CASE** (\$48, in black, silver and pink; see coach.com for area locations.)

This reporter doesn't give her dad underwear — ewww. But discerning husbands (or boyfriends, or friends-with-benefits or weirdly fashionable nephews) will appreciate the **BURBERRY MEN'S CHECKWOVEN BOXER** (\$45). The **BOXER BRIEF** (\$32) has plaid only along the band, thus adding the merest hint of the high-end. (1155 Connecticut Ave. NW; 202-463-3000 and Tysons Galleria, 703-288-1700.)

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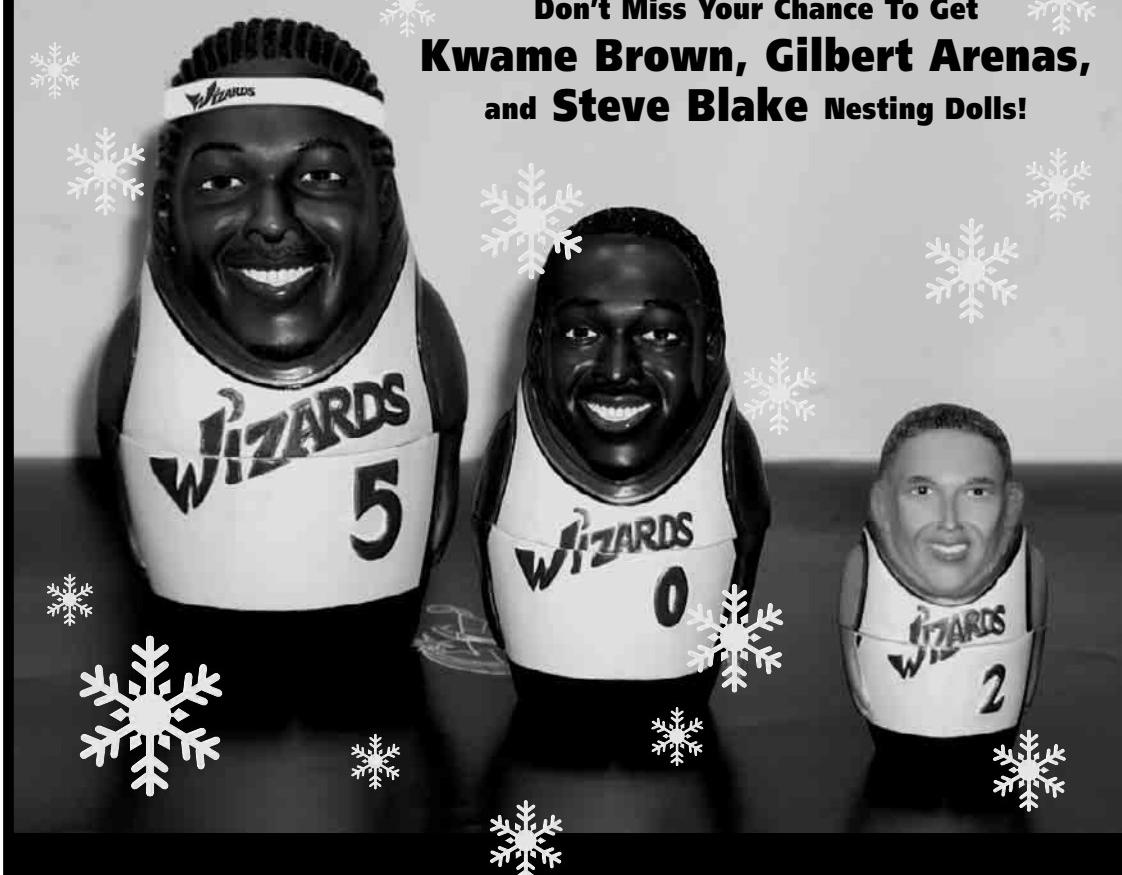
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Entertainment Weekend

STAGE

Starstruck: The venerable musical 'Hallelujah, Baby!' comes to Arena Stage. Find this and other weekend fun in our listings section. | 29-33



Fashion and Filigree

Zhang Yimou's 'House of Flying Daggers' is all style

FILM | "House of Flying Daggers," the second film in theaters this year from Chinese director Zhang Yimou, provides an interesting companion piece to the first — the Oscar-nominated "Hero" — if only because it's slightly more rooted in reality.

The characters still soar through the air with gravity-defying balletic agility, showing off eye-popping martial arts skills, but the leaves on the trees behind them aren't a radioactive shade of fuchsia when they do it.

Both feature love triangles, but "Flying Daggers" (starring Zhang Ziyi, Takeshi Kaneshiro and Andy Lau) is a romance wrapped around an action movie, while "Hero" was more of an action movie with a bit of romance tucked inside.

The delicately beautiful Zhang Ziyi plays Mei, a blind courtesan during the Tang Dynasty in the year 859. Secretly, though, she's a mem-



SOMETHING UP HER SLEEVES: Zhang Ziyi plays the blind warrior Mei in Zhang Yimou's second opulent action flick this year.

ber of an underground army called the House of Flying Daggers.

But Mei is captured, and Jin (Kaneshiro) — disguised as a warrior named Wind who's sympathetic to the Flying Daggers' cause — rushes in to help her escape.

The two go on an extended adventure, with policemen and Flying Daggers members on their tails. A battle in a bamboo forest, in which Jin and Mei take on an endless stream of baddies who dangle and sway from the tree tops, is a true

wonder of sight and sound.

"House of Flying Daggers" is a dazzling celebration of style over substance — cleverly staged and sumptuously photographed, but little more than an art-house soap opera. CHRISTY LEMIRE (AP)

TWO THUMBS UP? Or 10 toes? Get the verdict on the latest film releases in today's Washington Post.

Soaring Heights: Michael O'Sullivan finds the remake of "Flight of the Phoenix" to be high-carb filmmaking — a taut, stirring adventure populated with vivid characters. | *Weekend*

Love and War: World War I separates lovers and dominates the themes of "A Very Long Engagement," an extraordinary rumination on a heartless war. Stephen Hunter reviews. | *Style*

Surface Tension: "The Sea Inside" looks at a quadraplegic who fights for his death, but never burrows inside the man's soul. Michael O'Sullivan reviews. | *Weekend*

ClubPicks

FOR COMPLETE EVENT LISTINGS SEE WASHINGTONPOST.COM/ENTERTAINMENT

FRI: Get in the spirit with **THE USUAL SUSPECTZ** holiday party at Finemondo, complete with midnight Hpnotiq toast. ... **CINDY BLACKMAN** (Lenny Kravitz's hottie drummer) brings her own crew to Blues Alley for two nights. ... D.C. hearts its **LAST TRAIN HOME**. They set up camp at lota all weekend.

SAT: Hold off going to the mall — you might be able to get all the gifts you need up in da club. At Crossroads' **STONE LOVE SANTA PARTY**, Santa's giving away cash and prizes to naughty girls. ... Music nerds, say a last goodbye to **LUNA** at 9:30. ... Polished indie rockers **THE CLARKS** rock the Birchmere with **MICHAEL TOLCHER**. See them before they start dating models. ... Speaking of, **DREAM** caps off its Xmas dinner with a lingerie show.



The Clarks: "Bring on the models!"

SUN: Wrap up the weekend with **TSUNAMI TSUNDAYS** at Sango Sho (under Café Japone). **JUST JOSH** and **PAUL GARZA** provide funk, breaks, techno and funk'd-out house for your zone-out pleasure. **CELESTE DAWN MITCHELL**

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FIGHTING BACK AGAINST LISTENING IN: "Someone's Watching" follows counter-surveillance expert Bill Milley as he sweeps an office for hidden equipment.

You're Under Observation

Discovery Times'
'Someone's Watching'
is a brisk wake-up call

ALL EYES | "He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. He knows if you've been bad or good ..." There has always been a Big-Brotherish side to Santa Claus. Perhaps that's what makes "Someone's Watching" (Sat., 10 p.m., Discovery Times) so timely.

"Watching" explores the new technology that allows local, state and federal governments to spy on citizens. In the weeks after the terror attacks of 2001, many wanted

to give the federal government new tools to monitor would-be terrorists. Some feel that privacy watchdogs are inflaming fears and keeping us vulnerable to terrorists.

Others argue that there are plenty of historical examples of the government abusing its surveillance powers. A confidant of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. describes how FBI agents monitored his every conversation, at home and at work, for a period of more than three years during the 1960s. The agents heard plenty about his daughters' birthday party plans, but never uncovered evidence of subversion. KEVIN

MCDONOUGH (UNITED FEATURE SYNDICATE)

The Flawed Film

The dark children's tale 'Lemony Snicket' isn't tart or sweet

FILM | The key word in the mouthful of a movie title "Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events" is "series." And you probably thought it was going to be "of." Ha!

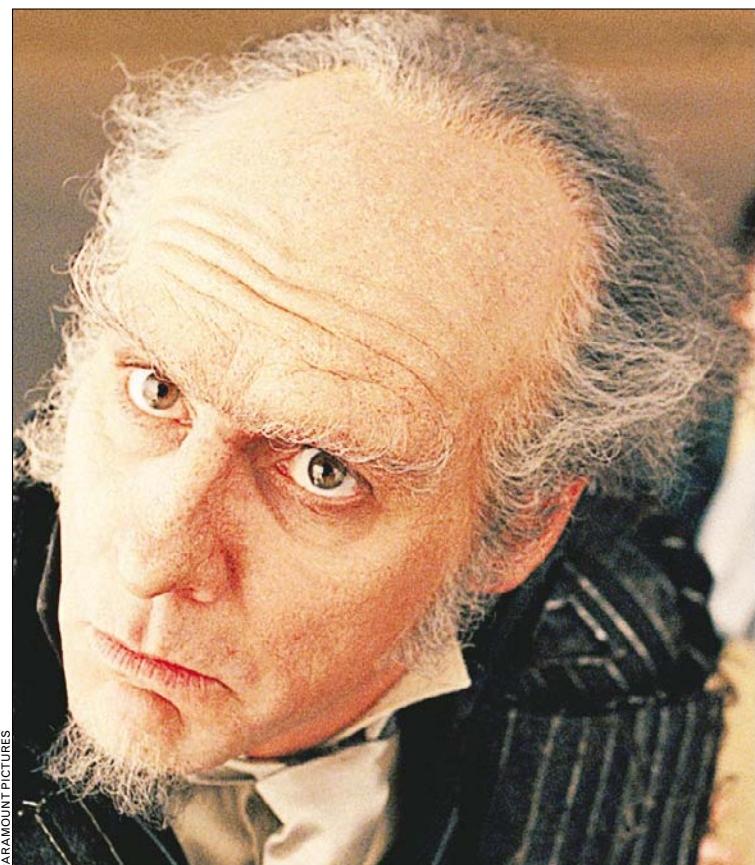
The film is based on the first three children's books by Daniel Handler about a trio of orphans trying to defend themselves from the dastardly Count Olaf.

That inherently episodic structure ends up weakening the film from director Brad Silberling and writer Robert Gordon, stripping it of a strong narrative drive.

Instead, the movie moves from one adventure — or rather, one elaborately detailed set piece — to the next. The children end up in the custody of different guardians, all of them mysterious "aunts" and "uncles" of their parents, who died in a fire.

Then, of course, there is Jim Carrey as Count Olaf inhabiting one intentionally idiosyncratic character after another. In his pursuit of the Baudelaire children — inventive Violet (Emily Browning), bookish Klaus (Liam Aiken) and baby Sunny (Kara and Shelby Hoffman) — he pretends to be various characters, but they all have shadings of Carrey's rubbery comedic shtick.

There are some clever unbilled



CARRY A BIG SHTICK: Jim Carrey can't help mugging his way through his roles.

cameos: Meryl Streep in a rare goofy role as the children's Aunt Josephine; Scottish comedian Billy Connolly as kindly snake expert Uncle Monty. One star who's heard but not seen is Jude Law, who narrates the film and gets some of the best darkly funny lines.

"This is an excellent opportunity to run out of the theater, living

room or airplane where this film is being shown," the British actor warns early on.

The young stars are lovely together. The way they support each other while outsmarting every adult they meet is among the strongest elements in an otherwise unfortunately uneven film.

CHRISTY LEMIRE (AP)



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Language of Love

'Spanglish' speaks to understanding families and cultures

FILM | James L. Brooks may be the best at turning slick sitcom story-lines into engaging big-screen fare.

Brooks did it with "Broadcast News" and "As Good as It Gets," and he does it again with "Spanglish," a culture-clash comic drama that rises above a forced scenario to present a rich, warm view of family ties both strengthening and decaying.

The first half of "Spanglish" feels almost cloyingly contrived at times, as writer-director Brooks spins his tale of beautiful Mexican immigrant Flor (Paz Vega) trying to live among Americans without really being touched by the culture.



FAMILY MAN: Adam Sandler plays the mild-mannered John Clasky in "Spanglish."

Yet the film builds in emotional resonance and dramatic weight. Flor's daughter, Cristina, provides voice-overs from the future that frame the story, from their crossing into the United States

through their contentious life with the Claskys, a white, affluent Los Angeles family.

Landing a job as the Claskys housekeeper, Flor is aghast at her employers' behavior, particularly

that of lady of the house Deborah (Tea Leoni), an overbearing dynamo of neuroses whose authoritarian exterior conceals deep self-doubt.

Her under-appreciated hubby, John (Sandler), is an ace chef and restaurant owner who becomes miserable when a four-star review sends demand through the roof.

Deborah takes John for granted, harbors resentment toward her mother, Evelyn (Cloris Leachman), and deviously seeks to control her own two children.

As "Spanglish" progresses, Leoni eases from shrillness to pathos as Deborah's facade crumbles. Sandler's restrained performance is quite a surprise, while Leachman is delightful as the boozy grandma forced by circumstance to truly mother her grown daughter for the first time.

The luminous Vega beautifully crosses the language barrier, conveying Flor's fierce spirit through her animated body language, forceful delivery and piercing expressions. DAVID GERMAIN (AP)

Sunday in
The Washington Post



Capital in the Spotlight:

Local pastor Chris D. Bowman goes national on CBS; also, the Kennedy Center honorees. | *TV Week*

The Long Road Back:

It was hard for Alan Babin in Iraq; it's even harder to be back home and badly wounded. | *The Magazine*

Extras! Extras! Discs to Cherish

A professional fan picks the best DVDs of new films in 2004

AMERICAN SPLENDOR The journey of cult comic writer Harvey Pekar grows more splendorous with commentary tracks and a bonus comic book.

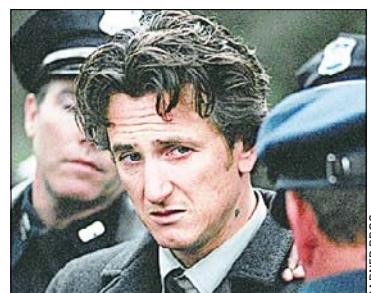
THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING This ranks high for sheer scope of background materials in its two-disc theatrical and four-disc extended cuts.

IN AMERICA Jim Sheridan's exquisite account of an Irish family transplanted to New York is augmented by a lovely collection of deleted footage.

MYSTIC RIVER Clint Eastwood's portrait of pals reunited by a murder; the three-disc set with commentary and soundtrack is the one to own.

THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS Come for the bawdy banter of snobs, stay for the charming DVD dinner chat among cast members.

THE STATION AGENT Chummy commentary with the stars and the film-



Sean Penn in the Oscar-winning "Mystic River," out on a deluxe DVD.

maker is like an evening with friends.

SUPER SIZE ME Morgan Spurlock's DVD stuffs in funny extras — like recipes from his vegan-chef girlfriend.

CITY OF GOD A searing portrait of Rio De Janeiro's narcotics gangs, accompanied by a compelling documentary.

THE TRIPLETS OF BELLEVILLE

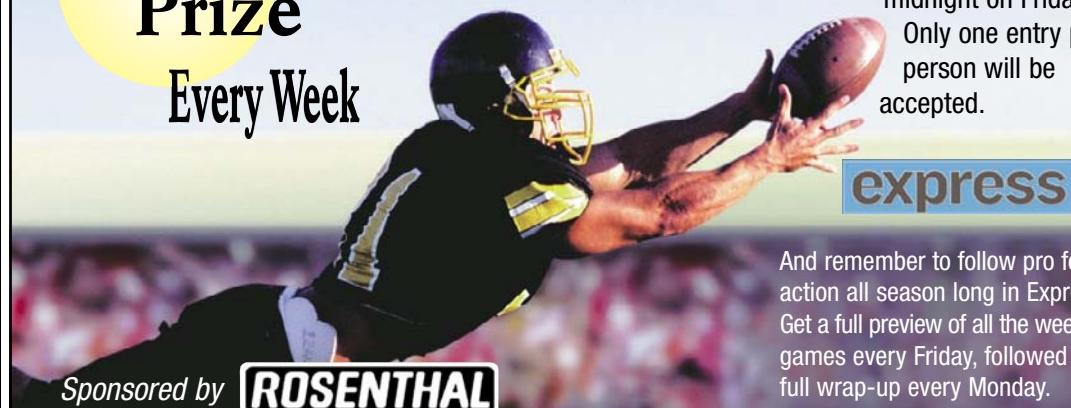
Sylvain Chomet's intoxicating animated flick commands repeated viewings.

LOVE ACTUALLY Richard Curtis' big, sloppy ensemble affair in praise of romance has one of the most polished batch of deleted scenes ever issued on a DVD. DAVID GERMAIN (AP)

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Weekend

Entertainment



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Reviews by The Washington Post's Jennifer Frey, Stephen Hunter, Nelson Pressley and Desson Thomson.

BLADE: TRINITY (R, 110 minutes)

Watching this film is like being rolled down a marble staircase in an oil drum:



Blade, center, and his photogenic posse saddle up to whack vampires.

loud, dark, bumpy and not even a little fun. One can't help recalling that the previous film in the Wesley Snipes-starring vampire-hunting series, "Blade II," had a real director (Guillermo del Toro) and

an epic scale. This movie takes off from the shaky idea that Dracula has returned and, like everybody who has overslept, he wants breakfast! Meanwhile Blade, framed by the vamps for killing a human, takes up with a new set of vampire hunters, kids all. Once the action starts, everything else stops. It's just one battle after another, most of it generic, all of it forgettable. (SH)

CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG, 105)

Derived from a novel by John Grisham, this film documents the calumny that accompanies the decision of a couple (Tim Allen and Jamie Lee Curtis) to skip Christmas one year and instead take a cruise. Everyone in the film is mean-spir-

ited, manipulative and repulsive, particularly Dan Aykroyd as a venal self-appointed community leader who leads a campaign against the Kranks. (SH)

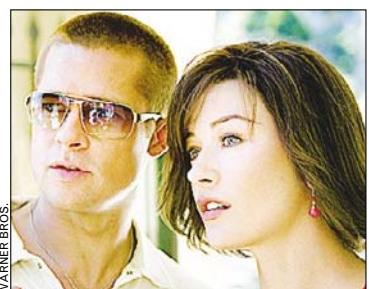
CLOSER (R, 103 minutes) In Mike Nichols' film, pressing matters of the jealous heart send four modern lovers into a roiling tizzy over the course of a few years. It's a saucy premise, especially when you consider the comely presence of Jude Law, Julia Roberts, Clive Owen and Natalie Portman doing all that bed-hopping, partner-swapping and truth-lopping. But if "Closer" shows us the whole Sturm und Drang of modern relationships—attraction, deception, jealousy and passion—it doesn't show us much more. Nichols' sophisticated direction, Patrick Marber's irony-laden dialogue and the eye-candilicious stars produce nothing more than surface warfare. (DT)

THE GREEN BUTCHERS (R, 95 minutes)

Danish writer-director Anders Thomas Jensen, an alumnus of the strict anti-genre Dogme 95 faction of filmmakers, has made a very tidy little genre picture—a black comedy about cannibalism. The unseasoned young butchers, Bjarne (Nikolaj Lie Kaasof) and Svend (Mads Mikkelsen), don't seem to be bad guys, though they certainly look creepy, especially sweaty Svend. He and Bjarne leave their bullying boss, set up shop and watch the paint dry until the inevitable accident occurs. All of a sudden, they have a ready supply of choice cuts that simply can't be rivaled. Jensen's tone is admirably dry, and the film offers its pleasures through small, writerly details. (NP)

NATIONAL TREASURE (PG, 136 minutes)

Structurally, this movie is of the school that might be called "one thing after another." It almost never slows down and seems to have been masterminded by an entire film crew on speed. But it's the movie equivalent of comfort food: Expect the expected and you'll have a good time. (SH)



"Is that guy prettier than me?" "Maybe, Brad, but he's not prettier than me."

OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG-13, 120 minutes)

This movie's not really about heists, and still less does it concern itself with "Ocean's Eleven," its much more disciplined predecessor. It's about hanging out, about the good fun that rich, handsome, famous people have. No one has thought much about story at all; instead, the movie reinvents itself about every 25 minutes. One problem is that 11 is a hard number to manage and 12—with the addition of Catherine Zeta-Jones—is even harder. There are too many characters and not enough story. That leaves the glamour boys—Brad Pitt, George Clooney, Matt Damon—to shamble through what remains of the several plots. (SH)

THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE

(PG, 88 minutes) The Nickelodeon cartoon is a classic: It's silly, it's sweet and it's full of all those adolescent jokes many find hard to resist (such as flatulence). And for those already acquainted with this sponge and his friends, the film provides an amusing enough romp through SpongeBob's familiar underwater universe—to the dreaded Shell City and the mainland. (JF)

The whole story: Read full reviews of these films and more at washingtonpost.com/entertainment



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MYSTERY MEAT: Bjarne and Svend just got in a shipment of fine, uh, "long pig."

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"TWO THUMBS UP."

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"A picture
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Greg Russell,
WDWB-TV (Detroit)



"ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR.
Brilliantly acted, 'Spanglish' is an Oscar®-caliber film;
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Tony Toscano, TALKING PICTURES



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Scott Patrick,
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Entertainment | Weekend

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SOUND

9:30 Club: Fri., Chris Isaak Christmas Tour, sold out; Sat., Luna, The Comas, 9 p.m., \$15. 815 V St. NW; 202-265-0930.

Apex: Fri., DJ Billy Carroll, 9 p.m., \$8; Sat., DC Drag Kings Christmas Show, 9 p.m., \$8. 415 22nd St. NW; 202-296-0505.

Black Cat: Fri., Jucifer, The Whips, People Chasing People, 9:30 p.m., \$8; Bliss, 9 p.m., \$6; Sat., Mousetrap, 9:30 p.m., \$8; The Catfish Shack, 9:30 p.m., free; Sun., Rock & Shop, 8:30 p.m., free. 1811 14th St. NW; 202-667-7960.

Blues Alley: Fri.-Sat., Cindy Blackman, 8 & 10 p.m., \$20; Sun., James Bazen Big Band, 8 & 10 p.m., \$18. 1073 Wisconsin Ave. NW; 202-337-4141.

Birchmere Music Hall: Fri., Marshall Crenshaw, Graham Maby, Eric Hutchinson, 7:30 p.m., \$19.50; Sat., Saffire: The Uppity Blues Women, 7:30 p.m., \$27.50; The Clarks, Michael Tolcher, 10 p.m., \$15-\$17.50; Sun., Maggie's Music: A Celtic Christmas, 7:30 p.m., \$19.50; Deanna Bogart, The Holmes Brothers, 7:30 p.m., \$20. 3701 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria; 800-551-7328.

Club Five: Fri., Pearl, That '80s Party, 9 p.m., \$10; Sat., Swayzak, 9 p.m., \$10; Sun., Trade, 9 p.m., \$10. 1214-B 18th St. NW; 202-331-7123.

DC 9: Fri., Liberation Dance Party, 8:30 p.m., \$5; Sat., Boogiewhawg, 8:30 p.m., \$7; Sun., Artomatic CD Release Party, 9 p.m., \$6. 1949 9th St. NW; 202-483-

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COME ON, RIDE THE TRAIN: It takes a lot of people to make Last Train Home what it is—the D.C. area's most beloved alt-country roots-rock band. The high-energy, high-lonesome rockers, who've since relocated, will always be one of D.C.'s favorite live acts. The group moves into Iota all weekend.

OUT & ABOUT | WHAT A CUT UP



ARTIS THE SPOONMAN

PIERCED EARS: There's only one Artis the Spoonman—at least, we hope there is. He began doing fancy stuff with simple cutlery and has become a cult star. Spoonman is part of the eccentric extravaganza Holiday Vaudeville, this weekend on the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage.

5000.

Dream: Fri., Taz & Abdul's B-Day Bash, 9 p.m., \$10-\$15; Sat., Xmas Dinner Party, Lust Lingerie Show, 9 p.m., \$10-\$15. 1350 Okie St. NE; 202-636-9030.

Fur: Fri., Fusion Friday, 9 p.m., \$15; Sat., Glow Saturdays, 9 p.m., \$15. 33 Patterson St. NE; 202-297-0377.

Galaxy Hut: Sat., The Nein, Rivulets; Sun., Louis Eagle Warrior, Dog & Pony Show; all shows 9:45 p.m., free. 2711 Wilson Blvd., Arlington; 703-525-8646.

Iota Club & Café: Fri., Last Train Home, Steve McWilliams, 9 p.m., \$12; Sat., Last

Train Home, Yell County, 9 p.m., \$12; Sun., Last Train Home, 2 p.m., \$12 adults, \$6 kids; RPM, Charlie Post, Black Hand, 8:30 p.m., \$8. 2832 Wilson Blvd., Arlington; 703-522-8340.

Jammin' Java: Fri., Nothin' Fancy, 8 p.m., \$15; Sat., The Soft Parade, 9 p.m., \$12; Sun., Kelly Minter, 7 p.m., \$10-\$12. 227 Maple Ave., Vienna; 703-255-1566.

Jaxx: Fri., Kix, Blue Vultures, 7:30 p.m., \$20-\$25; Sat., Monsters from the Surf, The Stunt Doubles, Mega-Tsunami, The Patapsco Kings, 7 p.m., \$10; Sun., Satyricon, Infernal Majesty, 3 Inches of Blood, Ecliptic, 5 p.m., \$15-\$17. 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield, Va.; 703-569-5940.

Kennedy Center, Millennium Stage: Fri.-Sat., Holiday Vaudeville; Sun., Zachary Smith, Beltway Brass Quintet, all shows 6 p.m., free. 2700 F St. NW; 202-467-4600.

Kennedy Center, Terrace Theater:

Sat., Peter Cincotti, 7:30 & 9:30 p.m., \$30; Sun., Choral Arts Society, 4 p.m., \$15. 2700 F St. NW; 202-467-4600.

State Theater: Sat., Yerba Buena, 9 p.m., \$15. 220 N. Washington St., Falls Church; 800-551-7328.

Twins Jazz: Fri.-Sat., Bruce Williams, 9 & 11 p.m., \$15; Sun., Ronnie Wells Workshop. 1344 U St. NW; 202-234-0072.

Velvet Lounge: Fri., The Alphabetical Order, Rodeo Jones, Misamerica, Rotoscope; Sat., Revival, Brad Rice; Sun., Wading Girl; all shows 8 p.m., free. 915 U St. NW; 202-462-3213.

Continued on page 30

2 GOLDEN GLOBE® NOMINATIONS BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM BEST ACTOR • JAVIER BARDEM

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Weekend Entertainment



Continued from page 29

SIGHT

Anacostia Museum: All the Stories Are True: African-American Writers Speak, through Dec. 31. Selected Works by William H. Smith, through Dec. 31. 1901 Fort Place SE; 202-287-2061.

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery: Dream Worlds: Modern Japanese Prints and Paintings From the Robert O. Muller Collection, through Jan. 2. Arts of Mughal

India, through Feb. 6. Asia in America: Views of Chinese Art From the Indianapolis Museum of Art, through March 20. Iraq and China: Ceramics, Trade and Innovation, through April 24. Cai Guo-Qiang: Traveler, through April 24. 1050 Independence Ave. SW; 202-357-4880.

Conner Contemporary Art: Erik Sandberg, through Dec. 23. 1730 Connecticut Ave.; 202-588-8750.

Corcoran Gallery of Art: Frank Gehry, Architect: Designs for Museums, through Feb. 21. Common Ground: Selections From the Collection of Julia J. Norrell, through Jan. 31. Inventions: Recent Paintings by Caio Fonseca, through Feb. 14. 500 17th St. NW; 202-639-1700.

Folger Shakespeare Library: Letter-Writing in Renaissance England, through April 2. 201 East Capitol St. SE; 202-544-7077.

Fraser Gallery Bethesda: Winter Group Exhibit, through Jan. 12. 7700E Wisconsin Ave., Bethesda; 301-718-9651.

Fraser Gallery Georgetown: F. Lennox Campello, through Jan. 19. 1054 31st St. NW; 202-298-6450.

Freer Gallery of Art: Work and Commerce in Chinese Painting, through Jan. 17. Life and Leisure: Everyday Life in Japanese Painting, through Feb. 20. Young Whistler: Early Prints and the French Set, through March 13. Luxury and Luminosity, through June 26. 12th Street and Jefferson Drive SW; 202-357-2700.

LAST CHANCE Gallery at Flashpoint: Anita Walsh: Floor Plan, through Dec. 22. 916 G St. NW; 202-315-1305.

Govinda Gallery: Kate Simon: Rebel Music, through Jan. 15. 1227 34th St. NW; 202-333-1180.

Hillwood Museum and Gardens: Tradition in Transition: Russian Icons in the Age of the Romanovs, through Dec. 31. 4155 Linnean Ave. NW; 202-686-5807.

Hirshhorn Museum: Ana Mendieta: Earth, Body, Sculpture and Performance, 1972-1985, through Jan. 2. Cai Guo-Qiang: Traveler, through April 24. Independence Avenue at 7th Street SW; 202-633-4674.

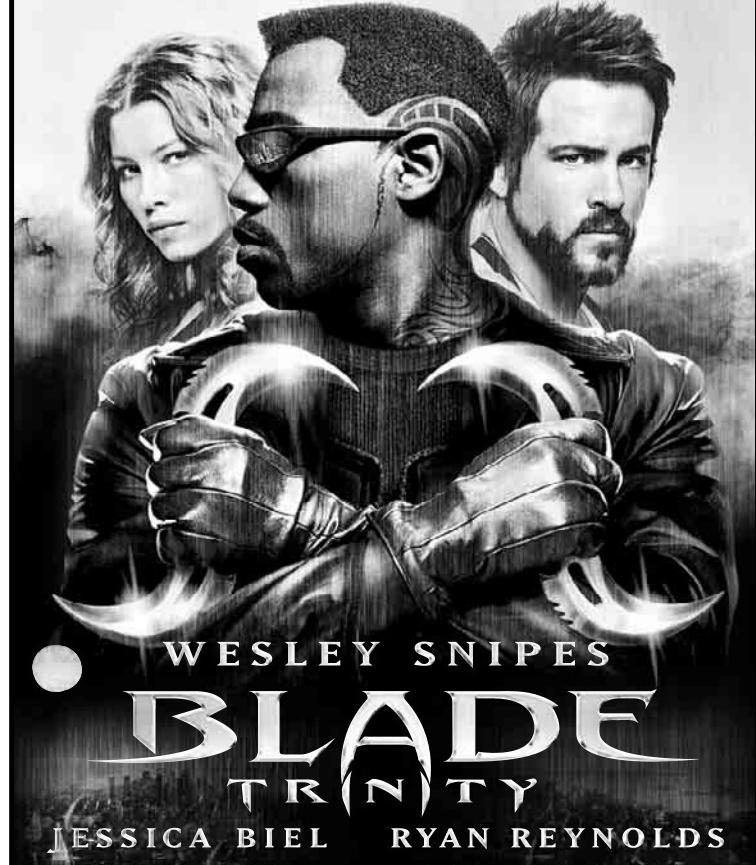
MUSEUMS | FINE CHINA



FRER GALLERY

FRAGILE LEGACY: A 14th-century porcelain plate is among the delicate textile treasures at the Sackler Gallery's exhibition, "Iraq and China: Ceramics, Trade and Innovation," running now through next spring.

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Irvine Contemporary Art: Time and Materials, through Jan. 15. 1710 Connecticut Ave. NW; 202-332-8767.

Kathleen Ewing Gallery: Christopher Burkett: Resplendent Light, through Jan. 8. 1609 Connecticut Ave. NW; 202-328-0955.

LAST CHANCE Library of Congress: From Haven to Home: 350 Years of Jewish Life in America, ends Sat. 10 1st St. SE; 202-707-5000.

LAST CHANCE Marsha Mateyka Gallery: Athena Tacha/Shields and Universes, ends Sat. 20 12 R St. NW; 202-328-0088.

National Building Museum: Five Friends From Japan: Children in Japan Today, through Feb. 13. Liquid Stone: New Architecture in Concrete, through April 17. Washington: Symbol and City, permanent exhibition. 401 F St. NW; 202-272-2448.

National Gallery of Art: All the Mighty World: The Photographs of Roger Fenton, through Jan. 2. Dan Flavin, a Retrospective, through Jan. 9. American Masters: From Bingham to Eakins, through

Continued on following page

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Entertainment Weekend



Continued from preceding page

Jan. 30. Gerard Ter Borch, through Jan. 30. Palace and Mosque: Islamic Art From the Victoria and Albert Museum, through Feb. 6. Six Centuries of Prints and Drawings, through Feb. 21. Fauve Painting From the Permanent Collection, through May 30. 600 Constitution Ave. NW; 202-737-4215.

National Geographic Society: Passages: Photographs of Africa, through Jan. 9. Mapping With Paper and Pixel, through Feb. 13. 17th and M streets NW; 202-857-7588.

National Museum of African Art: Treasures, through Aug. 15. 950 Independence Ave. SW; 202-633-4600.

National Museum of American History: Taking America to Lunch, through Dec. 31. The Beatles! Backstage and Behind the Scenes, through Jan. 2. The Photography of War: World War II Photographic Perspectives, through Jan. 2. Vote! The Machinery of Democracy, through Jan. 30. Ralph Bunche: African-American/Global Citizen, through March 31. Sports: Breaking Barriers, Breaking Records, through April 7. Separate Is Not Equal: Brown v. Board of Education, through May 31. 14th Street and Constitution Avenue NW; 202-633-1000.

National Museum of the American Indian: Native Modernism: George Morrison and Allan Houser, through Sept. 21. 4th Street and Jefferson Drive SW; 202-633-1000.

National Museum of Natural History: In Focus: National Geographic Greatest Portraits, through Jan. 2. 10th Street and Constitution Avenue NW; 202-357-2700.

LAST CHANCE National Museum of Women in the Arts: Claude Ragué Hirst: Transforming the American Still

Life, ends Sun. Transitory Patterns: Florida Women Artists, ends Sun. 1250 New York Ave. NW; 202-783-5000.

National Postal Museum: The Queen's Own: Stamps That Changed the World, through Jan. 11. 2 Massachusetts Ave. NE; 202-357-2991.

LAST CHANCE Numark Gallery: Chan Chao: Echo, ends Sat. 625 E St. NW; 202-628-3810.

Octagon Museum: Doodles, Drafts and Designs: Industrial Drawings From the Smithsonian Institution, opens Sun., through April 30. 1799 New York Ave. NW; 202-638-3105.

The Phillips Collection: Calder Miró, through Jan. 23. 1600 21st St. NW; 202-

387-2151.

Rails Collection: Mira Hecht: Full Circle, through Jan. 29. 1516 31st St. NW; 202-342-1754.

S. Dillon Ripley Center: Winograd, through Feb. 27. 1100 Jefferson Drive SW; 202-633-1000.

LAST CHANCE Spectrum Gallery: As I See It: Raymond Ewing Watercolors, ends Sun. 1132 29th St.; 202-333-0954.

LAST CHANCE Strand on Volta: Brandon Morse, ends Sun. 1531 33rd St. NW; 202-333-4663.

Strathmore Hall Arts Center: International Exhibition of Fine Art in Miniature, through Dec. 30. 10701 Rockville Pike, Rockville; 301-530-0540.

GALLERIES | UP CLOSE



Textile Museum: Over One, Under One, through Jan. 2. Floral Perspectives in Carpet Design, through Feb. 6. A Garden of Shawls: The Buta and Its Seed, through March 6. 2320 S St. NW; 202-667-0441.

Touchstone Gallery: 28th Anniversary Exhibition, through Jan. 2. 406 7th St. NW; 202-347-2787.

Transformer Gallery: Rejoice!, through Jan. 22. 1404 P St. NW; 202-483-1102.

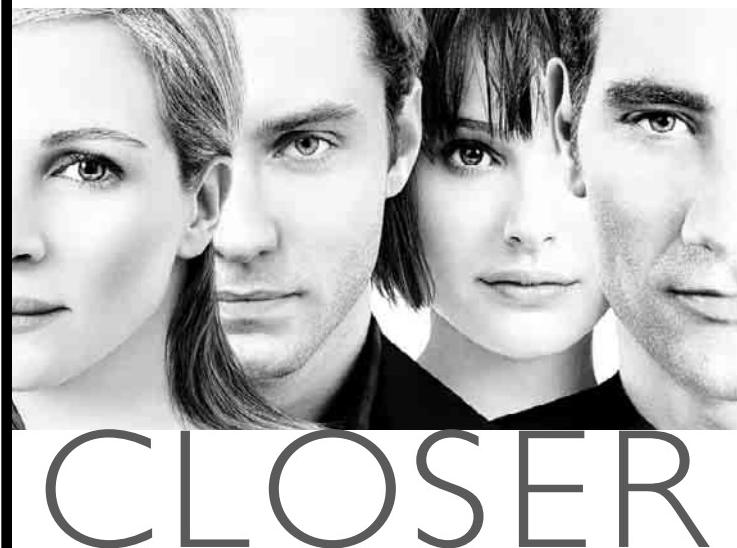
U.S. Botanic Garden: Home for the Holidays: A Sentimental Journey, through Jan. 9. 245 1st St. SW; 202-225-8333.

Zenith Gallery: Six Artists, Six Works, through Jan. 9. 901 E. St. NW; 202-783-2963.

Continued on page 32

5 GOLDEN GLOBE® NOMINATIONS INCLUDING BEST PICTURE ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR.

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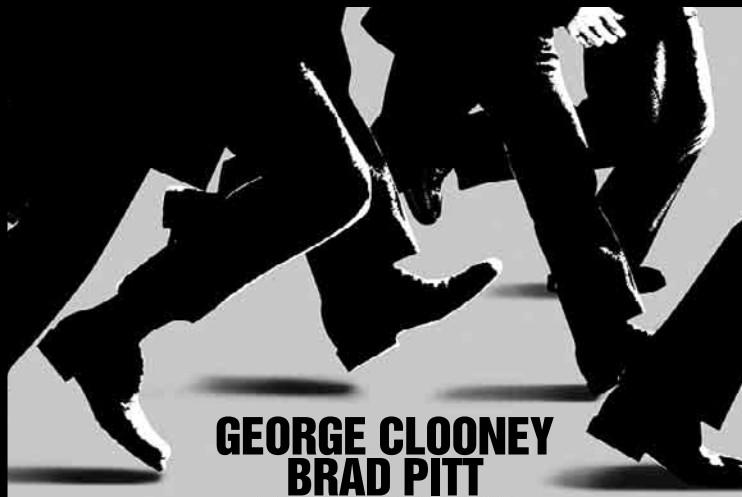
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Weekend Entertainment



Continued from page 31

STAGE

THIS WEEKEND ONLY Asaph Dance Ensemble Holiday Performance: Sun., 4 p.m., \$10; \$5 ages 12 and under, ages 65 and up. Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall, 3001 N. Beauregard St., Alexandria; 703-368-1812.

Carousel: through Dec. 31, \$15-\$26. Olney Theatre Center for the Arts, 2001 Olney-Sandy Spring Road, Olney, Md.; 301-924-3400.

A Christmas Carol: A Ghost Story of Christmas: through Jan. 2, 2:30 p.m., (Fri. & Sat.), 7:30 p.m. (Fri.-Sun.), \$16-\$48. Ford's Theatre, 511 10th St. NW; 202-347-4833.

THIS WEEKEND ONLY Ellington Nutcracker: National Ballet, through Dec. 21, 7:30 p.m. (Fri.), 2:30 p.m. (Sun.), \$15-\$30. Prince George's Community College, 301 Largo Road, Largo, Md.; 301-218-9822.

The Fever: through Jan. 3, 7:30 p.m. (Fri. & Sat.), 3 p.m. (Sun.), \$15-\$25. Warehouse Theater, 1021 7th St. NW; 703-684-7990.

LAST CHANCE Fit to Be Tied: Fountainhead Theatre, ends Sun., 8 p.m. (Fri. & Sat.), 2 p.m. (Sat. & Sun.), \$20. The-

atre on the Run, 3700 S. Four Mile Run, Arlington; 703-920-5923.

THIS WEEKEND ONLY Jim Gaffigan: through Dec. 19, 8 p.m. (Fri.-Sun.), 10:30 p.m. (Fri. & Sat.), \$15-\$17. The Improv, 1140 Connecticut Ave. NW; 202-296-7008.

LAST CHANCE Grace: Woolly Mammoth, ends Sun., 8 p.m. (Fri. & Sat.), 2 & 7 p.m. (Sun.), \$24-\$42. Warehouse Theater, 1021 7th St. NW; 202-783-3933.

Hallelujah, Baby! through Feb. 13, 8 p.m. (Fri. & Sat.), 2 & 7:30 p.m. (Sun.), \$47-\$66. Arena Stage, 1101 6th St. SW; 202-488-3300.

LAST CHANCE Highlights of the Nutcracker: ends Sun., noon, 1:30, 3 & 4:

30 p.m. (Sat. & Sun.), \$9-\$15. Atheneum, 201 Prince St., Alexandria; 703-548-0035.

Holiday Vaudeville: Fr., & Sat., 6 p.m., free. Kennedy Center, Millennium Stage, 2700 F St. NW; 202-467-4600.

The Importance of Being Earnest: through Dec. 26, 8 p.m. (Fri. & Sat.), 2 p.m. (Sat.), 7:30 p.m. (Sun.), Arena Stage, 1101 6th St. SW, \$40-\$59; 202-488-3300.

A Jazz, Hip-Hop Nutcracker: Sat. & Sun., 3 p.m. (Sat. & Sun.), 8 p.m. (Sat.), \$10-\$18. Stuart Hobson Middle School, 410 E St. NE; 202-785-0035.

Kwanzaa Celebration with Coyaba Dance Theater: Sun., Dec. 19, 4 p.m., \$18-\$25. Dance Place, 3225 8th St. NE;

202-269-1600.

LAST CHANCE Movin' Out: ends Sun., 8 p.m. (Fri. & Sat.), 2 p.m. (Sat. & Sun.), 7:30 p.m. (Sun.), \$40-\$85. National Theatre, 1321 Pennsylvania Ave. NW; 202-628-6161.

LAST CHANCE The Nutcracker: National Ballet, ends Sat., 10:30 a.m. (Fri.), 2:30 & 7:30 p.m. (Sat.), \$8-\$30. Prince George's Community College, 301 Largo Road, Largo, Md.; 301-218-9822.

The Nutcracker: The Puppet Company, through Dec. 31, 10 a.m. (Fri.), 10:30 a.m. (Fri.-Sun.), 1 p.m. (Sat. & Sun.), \$7. The Puppet Company Playhouse, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo; 301-320-6668.

Continued on following page


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OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG13) [CC] ✓ 3:15, 6:15, 9:15
BLADE: TRINITY (R) ✓ 2:00, 2:45, 3:30, 4:45, 5:45, 6:30, 7:20, 8:45, 9:30, 10:10
CLOSER (R) 1:45, 2:15, 4:15, 5:15, 6:45, 7:45, 9:20
ALEXANDER (R) 5:25, 9:05
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) 2:05, 3:00, 4:40, 7:10, 9:35
FINDING NEVERLAND (PG) 1:55, 2:35, 4:20, 6:55, 7:35, 9:25
BRIDGET JONES 2 (R) 1:30, 4:10, 7:05, 9:40
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 1:35, 4:25, 7:15, 8:10, 10:05
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10
AFTER THE SUNSET (PG13) 5:05, 9:55
KINSEY (R) 2:40, 5:35, 8:20
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) 2:20, 5:00, 7:25, 9:50
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) 1:40, 2:25, 4:35, 5:20, 7:20, 10:05
RAY (PG13) 1:50, 5:10, 8:35
SIDEWAYS (R) 2:50, 5:40, 8:40

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BLADE: TRINITY (R) ✓ 4:30, 7:25, 9:45
CLOSER (R) 4:40, 7:15, 9:30
ALEXANDER (R) 9:20 PM
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) 4:35, 7:20, 9:35
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 4:20, 7:05, 9:55
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 4:50, 7:40, 9:40
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) 4:00, 7:00
RAY (PG13) 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
SIDEWAYS (R) 4:10, 7:10, 9:50

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BLADE: TRINITY (R) ✓ 1:20, 2:20, 4:20, 5:40, 7:30, 8:15, 10:00
CLOSER (R) 1:15, 2:30, 3:35, 4:55, 5:55, 7:20, 8:20, 9:45
CLOSER (R) [CC] 1:15, 3:35, 5:55, 8:20
ALEXANDER (R) 1:05, 4:35, 8:05
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) 2:10, 5:15, 7:35, 9:55
FINDING NEVERLAND (PG) 1:25, 5:10, 7:25, 9:45
BRIDGET JONES 2 (R) 1:45, 5:20, 7:45, 10:00
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 1:30, 4:30, 7:15, 8:20, 10:00
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 1:40, 5:40, 7:05

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OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG13) 2:00, 2:45, 4:45, 5:30, 7:30, 8:15, 10:15
BRIDGET JONES 2 (R) 2:50, 3:20, 5:15, 5:45, 7:45, 8:20, 10:10
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 2:05, 2:30, 4:50, 5:25, 7:35, 8:30, 10:20
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) 2:15, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30
ACADEMY 8
Beltway Plaza on Greenbelt Rd., Center Court
703-998-4AMC

OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG13) 4:30, 5:00, 7:10, 7:40, 10:00, 10:40
BLADE: TRINITY (R) 4:40, 5:10, 7:20, 7:50, 9:50, 10:30
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) 5:30, 8:00, 10:10
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 4:50, 7:30, 10:20
AFTER THE SUNSET (PG13) 5:40, 8:10, 10:40
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) 5:20, 8:00, 10:30

Meet the Fockers

COLUMBIA MALL 14
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OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG13) ✓ 1:15, 2:15, 4:00, 5:10, 7:15, 8:15, 10:15
BLADE: TRINITY (R) ✓ 1:00, 2:00, 3:45, 4:45, 6:45, 7:45, 9:30, 10:30
CLOSER (R) 12:30, 2:50, 5:20, 8:10, 10:40
CLOSER (R) [CC] 12:30, 2:50, 5:20, 8:10, 10:40
ALEXANDER (R) 9:50 PM
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) 12:45, 4:30, 7:00, 9:40
FINDING NEVERLAND (PG) 1:45, 4:20, 7:05, 9:40
BRIDGET JONES 2 (R) 2:25, 5:05, 7:40, 10:20
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 1:30, 4:15, 7:30, 10:45
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 12:30, 2:30, 4:40, 7:00
AFTER THE SUNSET (PG13) 9:15 PM
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:25
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) 1:50, 4:55, 7:50, 10:35
RAY (PG13) 3:20, 6:45, 10:10
SIDEWAYS (R) 1:10, 4:10, 7:05, 9:55

COUNTRY CLUB MALL 6
Country Club Mall on Vocke Rd near Route 68.
703-998-4AMC

CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) 5:25, 7:45
BRIDGET JONES 2 (R) 5:25, 8:15
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 5:10, 8:00
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 5:40, 8:00
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) 5:40, 8:00
RAY (PG13) 5:10, 8:10

UNION STATION 9
Located at Union Station
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OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG13) ✓ 1:45, 2:15, 4:30, 5:15, 8:15
BLADE: TRINITY (R) ✓ 2:00, 2:30, 4:45, 5:30, 7:45, 8:30
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) 2:00, 4:45, 7:45
BRIDGET JONES 2 (R) 1:45
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 2:10, 5:10, 8:00
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 2:30, 5:20, 7:40
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) 2:10, 5:10, 8:00
RAY (PG13) 5:00, 8:15

Opens December 22

RIVERTOWNE 12
Exit 4A I-95, 1/2 mi. on Oxon Hill Rd.
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OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG13) 5:00, 5:40, 7:50, 8:20
BLADE: TRINITY (R) 5:20, 6:00, 8:00, 8:30
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) 5:20, 7:40
BRIDGET JONES 2 (R) 5:40, 8:10
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 5:30, 8:20
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 5:30, 7:40
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) 5:10, 7:30
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) 5:10, 8:00
RAY (PG13) 5:00, 8:10
SIDEWAYS (R) 5:50, 8:30

ACADEMY 6

Beltway Plaza on Greenbelt Rd., West Court

ALEXANDER (R) 4:40, 8:10
BRIDGET JONES 2 (R) 5:30, 7:50
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 5:20, 7:40
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) 5:10, 7:30
RAY (PG13) 4:50, 8:00
THE GRUDGE (PG13) 5:00, 7:20

SPRINGFIELD MALL 10

Loisdale and Franconia Road

OCEAN'S TWELVE (PG13) ✓ 1:30, 4:20, 5:00, 7:30, 8:30
BLADE: TRINITY (R) ✓ 2:15, 5:00, 8:15
ALEXANDER (R) 7:15
CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS (PG) 5:10, 8:15
BRIDGET JONES 2 (R) 5:20, 8:45
NATIONAL TREASURE (PG) 1:45, 4:30, 8:15
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (PG) 2:00, 4:10, 6:30
AFTER THE SUNSET (PG13) 8:45
THE POLAR EXPRESS (G) 4:40
THE INCREDIBLES (PG) 4:50, 7:45
RAY (PG13) 4:30, 8:00

Television



HIGH COMEDY: The long arm of "Desperate Housewives"—Showtime has ordered 10 episodes of a comedy series about a suburban mom who turns to dealing pot to augment her income. "Weeds" will star Mary Louise Parker as mother, wife, connection.

ON TV THIS WEEKEND

PIPE DREAMS

Popeye's got a brand new bag. The spinach-swilling seaman is turned into a computer-generated cartoon hero in **POPEYE'S VOYAGE: THE QUEST FOR PAPPY** (Fri., 8:30 p.m., Fox), featuring the voices of Billy West and Kathy Bates.

SMALL-TOWN LIFE

AT HOME WITH THE BRAVE (Fri., 9 p.m., A&E)
The families of three returning Iraq war veterans receive a surprise makeover. Shot entirely in small towns across the country, "Home" spotlights the benevolence of neighbors helping neighbors.

DOES SHE HAVE TO BE SPIUNKY?

DOES SHE HAVE TO BE SPUNKY? Jennie Garth stars in the 2003 Christmas movie **SECRET SANTA** (Sun., 8 p.m. NBC). She's Rebecca, a spunky reporter sent to a picture-postcard Indiana town to



Fiesty, spunky lovelorn Rebecca (Jennie Garth) in "Secret Santa."

expose a stranger who bestows life-altering holiday gifts. Her "feisty" acting range runs the gamut from Trista Rehn ("The Bachelorette") to Leiza Gibbons

FATHERS AND SONS

TRUE DADS (9 p.m., Spike) examines a generation of fathers trying to be more than the taciturn, pipe-smoking guy behind the newspaper. Profiles include professor Jack L. Daniel and his son Omari, authors of the book "We Fish: The

"Journey to Fatherhood" (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003). Football coach Mickey Matthews, discusses how his focus changed after his son, a star quarterback, was left paralyzed by a car accident. Dr. Jonathan Clark became a single father when his wife, Laurel, was killed in the 2003 space shuttle Columbia disaster; he discusses the challenges of raising his 9-year old son alone.

HEY, KIDS! A CREEPY TALKING CHRISTIAN DOG AND HIS BOY!

CHRISTIAN BOY AND HIS BOY:
DAVEY AND GOLIATH'S SNOWBOARD
CHRISTMAS (Sun., noon, Hallmark) You don't have to be Lutheran to love the classic stop-motion animated morality-tale series featuring a little rubber boy and his faithful talking dog, returning to TV after more than 30 years with the holiday.

GABY SINISE ROMANTIC LEAD

FALLEN ANGEL (Sun., 9 p.m., CBS) A yuppie lawyer (Gary Sinise) returns to

MERRY KITSCHMAS: "Tom Goes to the Mayor" is hypnotically low-budget

his Maine roots and finds an acquaintance (Joely Richardson) from his past. This December romance moves as slowly as diners toward the stale crumbs of last year's fruitcake.

CHEAP IS THE NEW GOOD

The Adult Swim feature **TOM GOES TO THE MAYOR** (Sun., 11:30 p.m., Cartoon

Network) offers a Christmas special called "Rats Off to Ya!" For the uninitiated, "Tom" is a talky, slyly silly new cartoon that takes minimal animation to a whole new level. It makes the low-budget effects of "Aqua Team Hunger Force" look like "Fantasia." KEVIN MCDONOUGH

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Technology

Cell phone fun goes interactive, leading to competitive networks

Who says "Solitaire" must be a lonely endeavor?

Cell phone games are adding community-oriented elements. After all, the ubiquitous gadget is meant to connect people.

"The mobile phone is really turning into a social computer," said Trip Hawkins, founder of Digital Chocolate Inc.

The San Mateo-based company is one of more than 300 developing cell phone games. It offers a mobile-league "Solitaire," where players compete for rank.

Next year, Los Angeles-based Tomo Software Inc. will launch a game that riffs off reality TV, mimics "The Sims" and "Tamagotchi" gaming worlds, and employs the networking of the Friendster online community.

A player establishes a character



SOLITAIRE NO MORE: Play and post your score to see if you beat others.

in the cyber world of Sora City. The character competes in events where others decide the winner. Players communicate through online journals, blogs or messages.

In another upcoming Digital Chocolate-developed game, "Message in a Garden," players keep a virtual garden, adding water and

sending pictures of their handiwork to fellow gardeners.

The more interactive the games, the greater the revenue. Most carriers offer about 250 games, from puzzles to role-playing games.

Millions of wireless subscribers will have phones with three-dimensional capabilities to handle realistic graphics next year.

JAMDAT Mobile Inc. hosts about 25,000 multiplayer matchups a day. MFORMA Group Inc. provides leaderboards. Next year, players will challenge others or forward games to friends, said Robert Tercek, MFORMA's chief strategy officer.

Sprint Corp expanded its "Game Lobby" so players can compete with users of AT&T Wireless's "Game Room."

Since "Bejeweled" was introduced in May 2003, Sprint's top

"Guys won't call each other to see how they're doing, but they'll play 'Fantasy Football' together."

TRIP HAWKINS

FOUNDER OF DIGITAL CHOCOLATE INC.,
DEVELOPER OF CELL PHONE GAMES

100 scorers have averaged a total of 422 hours, including one who stuck his phone into a Ziploc bag so he could play while showering, said Jason Ford, Sprint's general manager of games.

"Being able to compete ... is a core human nature," Ford said.

Digital Chocolate's Hawkins characterized cell phone games this way: "Guys won't call each other to see how they're doing, but they'll play 'Fantasy Football' together." MAY WONG (AP)



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Marc Fisher

Baseball Fallout

Washington Post Metro columnist **MARC FISHER** was online Thursday to discuss the fate of the deal to bring baseball to D.C. | washingtonpost.com/liveonline

Do you think that the D.C. Council really appreciated the uproar that their actions on Tuesday would cause? Is there a possibility they will go back and undo the damage?

Oh, by the time they voted, they knew. Some of them were too thick to understand Linda Cropp's proposal when she first stated it. Vincent Orange spent the better part of an hour trying to comprehend it. But it was clear enough, and they went for it anyway.

There's still hope, but it will require huge egos to step down a couple of notches and come together, and there is precious little history of that happening in this bunch.

Has Cropp committed political suicide? If not, what can we do to get her out of office? She's given the city a black eye.

Hardly. Quite to the contrary, she's greatly boosted her chances to become mayor. She wins either way: If baseball walks, she's the one who stood up for the taxpayers and took a stand against the elite forces trying to take over the city. If she gets a private money deal, she's again

the taxpayers' savior.

Does the mayor even have legal authority to negotiate deals on behalf of the city?

It's the mayor's job to negotiate deals and bring them to the council. He did that, and he involved Cropp and others in the talks. But he dropped the ball at the crucial moment, when it came time to make the sale to the citizens and to the full council when they were hearing that pressure from the voters. That's when Tony Williams decided to spend his time in China.

I've already spent \$75 on a Washington Nationals cap, T-shirt, etc. Looks like I wasted my money. Should I ask Tony Williams and Linda Cropp for a refund?

Nah, you'll get well more than that by selling them on eBay next year.

→ Today on Live Online

1 P.M.: Brian Walker discusses his book, "The Comics Before 1945," and his work with his father Mort Walker, who created "Beetle Bailey" and "Hi and Lois."

5 Day Forecast for the Washington Area



Partly sunny, a blustery morning

50°



Partly cloudy, colder

32°



Partly sunny

44° / 34°



Rather cloudy, breezy

46° / 34°



Flurries possible, windy, very cold

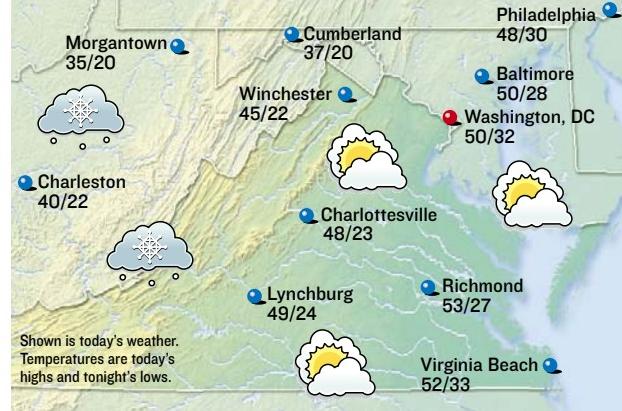
38° / 28°



Mostly sunny, very cold

38° / 26°

Regional Weather



Almanac

Washington, D.C., through 4 p.m. Thur.

Temperature

High	46°
Low	24°
Normal high	47°
Normal low	32°
Average humidity	51%

Precipitation

24 hours ending 4 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	2.08"
Normal month to date	1.55"
Year to date	41.52"
Last year to date	59.47"
Normal year to date	37.96"

For up-to-the-minute weather, see: washingtonpost.com/weather

Regional Forecast

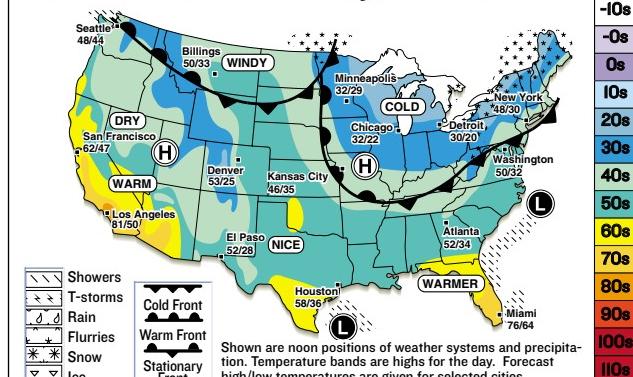
D.C. Metro: Today, partly sunny, blustery early. High 50. Wind northwest 12-22 mph, diminishing late. Tonight, partly cloudy, colder. Low 32.

Sun and Moon

Sunrise today 7:21 a.m.
Sunset tonight 4:48 p.m.
Moonrise today 12:00 p.m.
Moonset today 11:26 p.m.

First	Full	Last	New
Dec 18	Dec 26	Jan 3	Jan 10

National Weather for Friday, December 17



National Cities

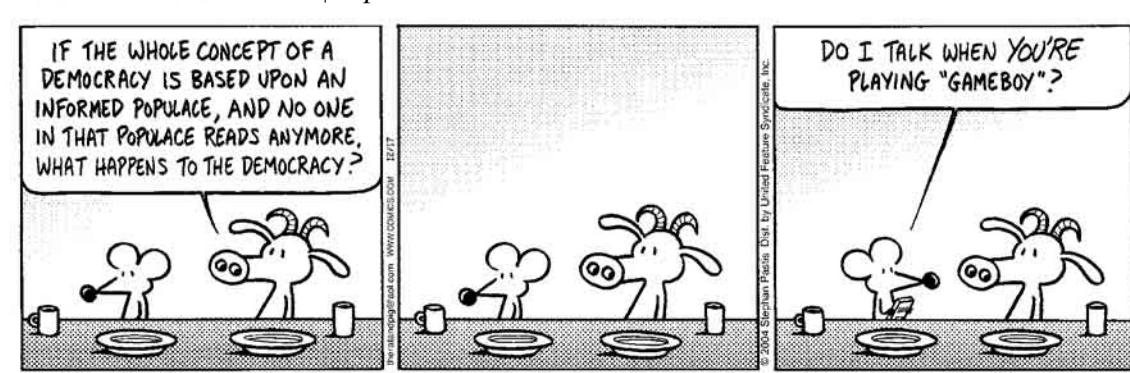
City	Today Hi/Low/W	Sat. Hi/Low/W	City	Today Hi/Low/W	Sat. Hi/Low/W
Atlanta	52/34/pc	53/37/pc	Amsterdam	40/33/sn	37/29/sn
Boston	45/23/pc	38/32/pc	Athens	54/43/c	56/45/r
Chicago	32/22/pc	36/12/sn	Berlin	38/30/sn	34/25/sn
Dallas	56/38/pc	60/32/s	Buenos Aires	82/64/s	86/64/t
Denver	53/25/s	48/20/pc	Calgary	49/24/pc	37/26/c
Honolulu	82/70/s	84/70/s	Dublin	46/36/r	43/34/r
Kansas City	46/35/s	52/35/s	Geneva	37/30/sn	34/33/sn
Los Angeles	81/50/s	81/50/s	Moscow	32/24/c	32/23/sn
El Paso	52/28/s	53/25/s	New York City	48/30/pc	40/34/pc
Houston	58/36/s	60/35/s	Orlando	70/52/pc	68/50/pc
Miami	76/64/sh	75/64/sh	Seattle	48/44/r	50/42/pc
Philadelphia	48/30/pc	49/32/pc			
Richmond	53/27/s	55/30/s			
Washington, DC	50/32/s	52/32/s			
Charlottesville	48/23/s	50/28/s			
Charleston	40/22/s	42/25/s			
Lynchburg	49/24/s	51/27/s			
Virginia Beach	52/33/s	54/35/s			

s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.

The Duplex | Glenn McCoy



Pearls Before Swine | Stephan Pastis



Letters

distasteful and disgusting. I really could have gone without seeing butt crack and boob staring at me first thing in the morning. You should all be ashamed of yourselves and apologize to your readers for the disgusting, pornographic peep-show of a photo.

—NATALIE SHANE
Hyattsville, Md.

Stand Clear of the Doors

SEVERAL TIMES IN the past week, I have seen people force the train doors open so they can enter or exit. These people cause delays for everyone in our subway system. Eating a candy bar is one thing. Damage to the train doors is another.

—AARON CLEMENTS
Washington, D.C.

LOOK out

People

MUSICAL CHAIRS

Though the Sound of It Is Something Quite Atrocious

Critics love the new stage presentation of "Mary Poppins," but their comments may not be music to **JULIE ANDREWS'** ears. The show, which premiered Wednesday night, stars Laura

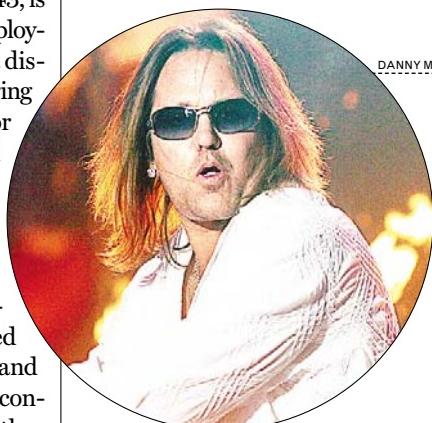


Michelle Kelly in the role that Andrews made famous. "In the lead role, [Kelly] is an entire category better than the great Julie Andrews," raved a Daily Mail reviewer. "More power to them," Andrews said of the show during an interview on AP radio. "There'll be a new Mary Poppins doing that and it's wonderful. You've got to keep going on." (AP)

METAL IRONY

Motley Crue Frontman Neil Slapped With Warrant

Motley Crue singer **VINCE NEIL**, 43, is accused of knocking out an employee of a Dallas nightclub after a disagreement over sound levels during a concert. An arrest warrant for misdemeanor assault was issued Wednesday for Neil in the fight at Gilley's Dallas during an Oct. 30 show. Gilley's soundman Michael Talbert was knocked unconscious by a punch allegedly thrown by Neil that pushed him to the floor. Dallas police and prosecutors said if Neil doesn't contact them about the warrant, they probably will wait to act on it when he returns to the area. (AP)



Despite his age and growing paunch, Neil is still working that bad-boy image.

KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/AP

CASH FLOW

'Nash Bridges' Memorabilia Boom on eBay Explained

DON JOHNSON can breathe easy again. The creditors listed on bankruptcy petitions involving the "Miami Vice" and "Nash Bridges" star have been paid off. Among the creditors that sued Johnson was Los Angeles-based City National Bank, which sought to force an auction of his \$21 million, 17-acre ranch near Aspen, Colo., to recoup \$930,000 it claimed he owed. (AP)

DANNY MOLOSHOK/AP

LOST ICONS

B-52's 'Love Shack' Burns Down; Was 'Hot as an Oven'

It was set way back in the middle of a field, just a funky old shack — and they'll never get it back. The tin roof and burned-out frame are all that remains of the little old place near Athens, Ga., where singer **KATE PIERSON** once got together with her bandmates from the **B-52'S**. A fire gutted the unoccupied five-room cabin off Jefferson River



LOOK OUT! It Just Came Out of Nowhere

WHITNEY HOUSTON rear-ended an Alpharetta, Ga., city bus with her sports car on Wednesday. The accident happened as Houston was making a left turn. The bus sustained minor damage, and the bumper of Houston's Porsche was mangled. She was cited for failure to yield, a misdemeanor. No one was hurt. (AP)

DESPERATION

Boorish Americans Blamed For Boring Epic's Failure

Director **OLIVER STONE** says he's optimistic that his historical epic "Alexander" will do well in Europe after getting off to a disappointing start at home. "People in America are apathetic to ancient history — they are," Stone said Thursday in Paris. "They don't study the classics like they do in Europe, so there is a significant difference in reaction." (AP)



EMILIO MORENATTI/AP

FOR THE TROOPS

A Little Levity

American forces serving at Bagram air base in Afghanistan got a little early Christmas cheer Thursday as **ROBIN WILLIAMS** — along with football star John Elway and others — stopped by on a tour of American servicemen serving far from home. In one of the few non-naughty bits of Williams' routine, the manic comedian described how conditions have changed since his last trip to Bagram. "It's a lot like Palm Springs, except for the mines and the small-weapons fire," he quipped. (AP)



Kate Pierson, bottom, and the band before their whole shack shimmied.

Road that some believe inspired the B-52's "Love Shack," which has been a party hit since its 1989 release. Mats Sexton, author of "The B-52's Universe," said Pierson talked to him of her former house. "I remember Kate telling me about how many of the early songs were jammed on in the cabin," Sexton told the Athens Banner-Herald. Fire officials are investigating the possibility of arson. No word on how much juke box money it was worth. (EXPRESS)

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1903

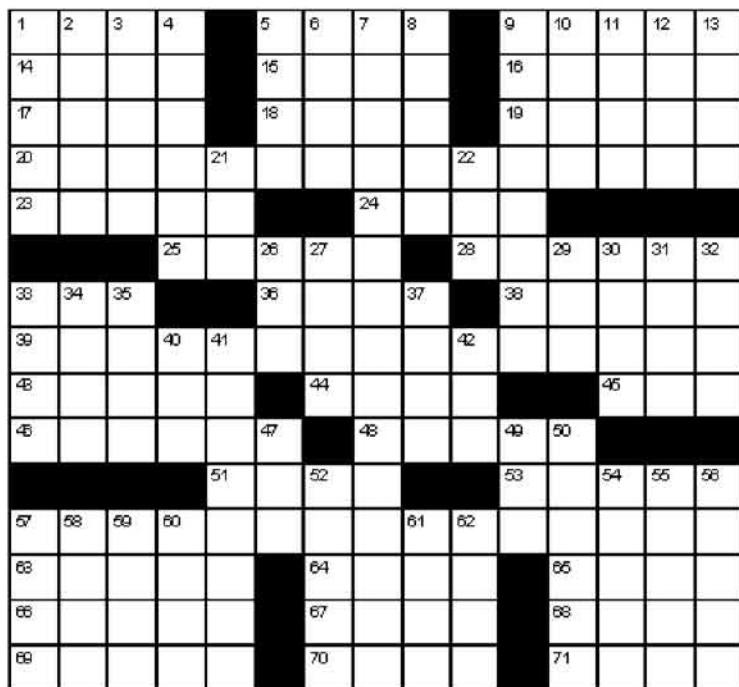
On Dec. 17, Wilbur and Orville Wright went on the first successful manned powered-airplane flights, near Kitty Hawk, N.C., using their Wright Flyer; also, in 1830, South American patriot Simon Bolivar died.

Bones Aplenty | Edited by Timothy E. Parker**ACROSS**

- 1 Places for pampering
5 Target for mascara
9 Gave up
14 Solitude
15 Overly sweet, say
16 Teddy Roosevelt's daughter
17 Modern Mesopotamia
18 Move, as on a swivel chair
19 Spread outward
20 Some bones
23 American of Japanese birth
24 Planet reporter
25 "The African Queen" hanger-on
28 Keep from practicing
33 Tax consultant, often
36 Something to hold on to
38 Weeping statue of myth
39 Some bones
43 South American range
44 Holier-than-
45 Court do-over
46 Ready (with "up")
48 Like some needs
51 Gift-card word
53 Jazzmen's licks
57 Some bones
- 63 "Let's Make ___"
64 Canal or Lake
65 Worst kind of loser
66 Steinbeck story (with "The")
67 Activates a magic lamp
68 Heavenly bear
69 Robe fabric
70 Office title (Abbr.)
71 Chop copy

DOWN

- 1 "The X-Files" genre
2 Prince of Troy
3 Bedouins, e.g.
4 "Rambo II," e.g.
5 Presley or Bonet
6 Org. co-founded by Helen Keller
7 Some bones
8 Risible beast
9 Mild stimulant
10 Women's magazine
11 Circle meas.
12 Barely brown
13 Sika, e.g.
21 Placement, on the links
22 Sentence extender
26 Sounds of hesitation
27 Part of the movie credits
29 Sidney Poitier title role
30 Bubble up
31 French cleric
57 Some bones



- 33 Steep, rugged rock
34 Glazier's unit
35 ___ codicil (bequeath)
37 Sphinx, in part
40 Suffix for cash
41 In a beneficial manner
42 Fourth book of the OT
47 Watson and No
49 "___ tu" (Verdi aria)
50 Powder room paper
52 Met performance
54 Norwegian inlet
55 Language of Iran
56 Emulate Richard Simmons
57 Kirk's rank (Abbr.)
58 "Zip-___-Doo-Dah"
59 Posterior
60 Henry VIII's sixth
61 Ad-___ (improvises)
62 Jerkin

Yesterday's Solution**Horoscope**

By Stella Wilder

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) Memories will play a large part in determining just how you will think and act. Don't get lost, however, in your own past.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) You may have to pick up the pace, especially toward midday, in order to tend to all the personal business on the docket.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) A long-term wait of some kind is coming to an end, and prepare for a reunion or homecoming.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) Your calm, positive approach will be well received and appreciated by those around you, who may not be as easy-going or relaxed.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) You'll enjoy an increased sense of confidence and the self-assurance that comes from knowing you've done all you can.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) The subtle, detailed approach will win the day. Don't overlook those things that escape the notice of others.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) You'll want to do things in your own way to the extent that others may back away and leave you very much alone for a time.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) What others are not providing you with, you can certainly provide for yourself and

then some.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Your expectations are high, and you won't easily shake the feeling that something big is just around the corner. Keep your eyes open.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) You'll be accommodating to your friends and supporters, and you'll give those who do not agree with you the benefit of the doubt.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) You're after a little more in the way of recognition and respect and when your turn comes, you can certainly have more than your share.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) Go about your business in a quiet, unassuming manner, and tomorrow you're sure to win the acclaim of many. You've got something few enjoy.

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